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Silent Messages

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To Karen

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Preface

Our speech-oriented culture is just beginning to take note of the profound and overlooked contribution of nonverbal behavior to the processes of communication. This contribution of our actions rather than our speech is especially important, since it is inseparable from the feelings that we knowingly or inadvertently project in our everyday social interaction and determines the effectiveness and well-being of our intimate, social, and working relationships. Indeed, in the realm of feelings, our facial expressions, postures, movements, and gestures are so important that when our words contradict the silent messages contained within them, others mistrust what we say—they rely almost completely on what we do.

People who have a greater awareness of the communicative significance of actions not only can insure accurate communication of their own feelings but also can be more successful in their intimate relationships, in artistic endeavors such as acting, or in work that involves the persuasion, leadership, and organization of others. There are those, however, who somehow are constantly misunderstood; others whose nonverbal style discourages friendships and causes them to live lonely and isolated lives. Most can benefit considerably from a greater awareness of their social style, the effect it has on casual and brief interactions with others, or its more general effect on their social life.

The politician on the campaign trail can obtain dramatically different results depending not so much on what he says but on how he says it and the medium through which he elects to say it. Of two persons who are given the same script of television or radio commercial, one may produce a far more effective message because of his highly responsive and undomineering manner, whereas the other fails because of his bland vocal or facial expression.

A person must select the medium for delivering his message to the masses according to his idiosyncracies. A politician who relies more heavily on his gestures and facial expressions than on his tone of voice may make a good showing on television but may be less effective on radio.

Such distinctly different styles are apparent not only in politics or advertising but also in everyday situations. We can observe a stranger talking to others in a distant group without being able to hear his words; and we can feel that we like or dislike him or feel that we know the kind of person he is. This shows that appearance and especially nonverbal mannerisms can significantly contribute to the impression one makes.

Our physical surroundings—the props that we almost inadvertently select as the background for our interactions with others—often help foster our particular effective or ineffective manner in relating to others. The furniture arrangement of a professional's office, the architecture of someone's house, or the design of his living room can enhance an already effective way of relating to people, hamper that style, or, worse yet, make things even more difficult for one who has trouble relating to others.

Where do we choose to sit if we enter a lounge and notice a stranger who seems interesting to get to know? The answer to this simple problem raises a lot of questions, some of which will be taken up in a section on the environment's contribution to the regulation of silent messages.

Our discussion will frequently turn to the distinctive roles of nonverbal behaviors and speech in communication and point to the more restricted denotative scope of actions relative to words. This narrower scope of nonverbal behavior is more than adequately offset by its transcultural quality. Consensus among different nationals as to which actions reflect what kind of feelings is far greater than the correspondence of the words they use for the same feelings. It follows that actions are more suitable than words or other abstract symbols for the attempt to develop a limited international language—an enormous task which we only now are beginning to undertake.

The present approach to the description of silent messages is one answer to "How is it possible to have consensus within and sometimes between cultures in using and understanding nonverbal signals when, unlike language, such matters are hardly ever explicitly discussed or taught?" The answer to this dilemma was that only a very few basic dimensions of human feelings and attitudes are conveyed nonverbally. These are variations in like-dislike, potency or status, and responsiveness. Each of these qualities is in turn related to a basic metaphor that provides the necessary link between the feeling, such as liking, and the behaviors which can reflect that feeling, such as approaching. The shared metaphors (for example, people approach things they like and avoid things they dislike) make it possible to attain consensus in interpreting feelings along each of these three dimensions. In addition, various combinations of these three dimensions allow us to express even the most subtle nuances of feeling.

The first of the three primary feeling dimensions requires little definition. The second, dominance, refers to a controlling versus a submissive and dependent attitude. Extreme examples are the dignified postures and movements of a monarch or those of a snob who exudes aloofness; these are in contrast with the shrinking posture of a weak and submissive person, which almost connotes, "Don't hit me, please!"

Responsiveness refers to the extent of awareness of and the reaction to another. Alternatively, it reflects how much someone else, whether for good or bad reasons, is important or in the foreground for us. Low responsiveness is seen in the withdrawn schizophrenic patient who is oblivious to the people around him. This is contrasted with the high responsiveness of a very emotional person who readily expresses anger, joy, or hurt feelings.

Since the present approach is novel and differs from that of other writers in this field, some readers may find it helpful to orient themselves by first reading the final chapter of this volume. There are also additional selected references to the work of others in the "Suggested Readings" at the end of each chapter.

Many people have contributed to make this book possible. I am most grateful to my colleagues and graduate students who have worked with me on the experiments which were essential to this effort. I am especially thankful to Lena Chow who very patiently worked along on the many versions of the manuscript.

A.M.

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1

Immediacy: liking and approach

A baby is encouraged to raise its arm and move its fingers in a curling motion in greeting. Adults often raise an arm forward and up, more or less expansively, when greeting a friend at a distance. As we prepare to terminate a conversation, we may not indicate in words but simply change position by moving forward to a more upright, less relaxed position in the chair. These silent messages signal to others a wish to leave; and when the messages are understood and accepted, the discussion draws to a close by mutual consent and without rancor.

Such behavior patterns and many others can be understood in terms of the *immediacy principle*: People are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer [85, 112, 135, 170].

An inexperienced gambler betrays too much for his own good at the poker table. Sometimes he places his chips in the middle of the pot; at other times, he places them close to himself, barely touching the pot. Sometimes he sits close to the table; at other times, he leans back and away. Sometimes he moves fast to place his bet; at other times, he moves slowly, with deliberation, and almost reluctantly. In the first of each pair of behaviors, the novice gambler shows a greater willingness to approach the betting situation. A shrewd observer could (and a good poker player does) use such variations to estimate when his opponent has a good hand and when he is less certain of its value (as when he places the chips more toward himself than the pot, when he leans back, and when he places his bet slowly). Expert gamblers, particularly the professionals, know that subtle nonverbal actions can betray their feelings about the value of the cards they hold. Therefore, a good poker player not only maintains a poker face but also always assumes the same posture, always places the chips in the same location as he bets, and always moves at the same speed and with the same decision time. A uniform and neutral set of behaviors guarantees that minimal information is conveyed about feelings. In poker at least, this is wise, because it is difficult to manipulate nonverbal behaviors; there are too many ways in which information about feelings can be revealed [41, 119]. So, if you want to play effective poker, follow the simple rule: Uniform behavior for all hands.

Of course, most often we do not (or cannot) physically approach things that we like or physically move away from things that we dislike. We do not snuggle up to someone while he is discussing a subject of interest, then stalk away when he turns to uninteresting topics. However, most of us reveal our reactions most of the time. The immediacy in behavior comes across in a number of *abbreviated* forms of approach or avoidance. An abbreviated approach can be expressed by attentive observation or mutual gaze [44, 45, 46, 81]. In response to a remark that appeals to us, we may "approach" by asking questions or leaning forward. In response to discussion we find uninteresting or objectionable, we may "avoid" by remaining silent and leaning back, farther away from the speaker. Whether we look at a speaker or look away while he talks is also a measure of our interest [47, 48].

The curling of a baby's fingers in greeting illustrates an abbreviation of grasping, which of course is a form of approach since it indicates a desire to bring the other person closer and implies a positive feeling. The lift of a hand in the direction of someone greeted at a distance is not so much an abbreviated grasp, but rather an abbreviated reaching to touch [169]. Touching is of course a variant of immediacy—a very important one. This arm gesture that accompanies a called greeting conveys a warmer and more friendly feeling than words alone.

Edging forward in a chair or pushing the chair back when we want to end a conversation, can be considered an abbreviated movement of departure. Such abbreviations should make words unnecessary. The change in bodily position alone should be sufficient to clue the other person that we would like to leave.

We also use abbreviated movements of departure in conversations while standing. We turn around or make small circles away from and back to the person we are talking with—especially if we are extremely anxious about getting away but feel that we can't say anything about it. The abbreviated walking away signals our desire to leave. More generally, walking about during conversation with another indicates distress [120, 129].

We are sometimes forced to remain in a situation with someone who is offensive and whose presence becomes nearly intolerable. We avoid his eyes and try not to look in his direction. We may turn to one side [100] and look at various objects in the room or visible through a window, or we may take refuge in meditative silence [129]. Here again, turning away and looking away are abbreviations of the movements associated with leaving, and they show our negative feelings. Physically, we may be confined for however long with this insufferable person, but our unspoken messages tell of our desire to get away.

Abbreviated approach includes such behaviors as assuming a position close to someone [86], leaning toward him [111], touching [77, 78], reaching out as though to touch (as in a raised hand during a greeting), abbreviated grasping gestures, bodily turning toward him, and looking into his eyes [112]. Also included is talking to someone instead of remaining silent, since when we talk, eye contact and involvement with the other person are increased, whereas when we are silent, we are less likely to have eye contact and are more likely to be preoccupied with other things [148, 149].

Immediacy behaviors involve an increase in the sensory stimulation between two persons [112]. When we stand close to someone or talk to him, a great deal more stimulation and information are exchanged than if we were to stand farther away or remain silent.

Immediacy reveals our feelings about things as well as people. In an art gallery, we tend to spend more time with a painting that interests us. We seek the best distance for viewing all of it, and we spend more time looking at it. There is often a temptation to touch those sculptures that we find appealing. On the other hand, we tend to walk past other exhibits, glancing only long enough to determine that they are of little or no interest. Generally then, we select positions that increase stimulation from those objects that we prefer or like and try to shut off stimulation from others that do not interest us.

Closeness and liking

Behaviors that relate to immediacy can be indicative of both transitory feelings and more stable attitudes. By using this concept, we can gain a greater awareness of how we feel toward others and how others feel toward us.

Notice where you choose to sit at a party, at a meeting, in a classroom. When there is ample choice of seats, you probably select a seat close to the person you like best and where you can comfortably have eye contact with him. When you talk in a group, note that you tend to address the people whom you are trying to please, or those whom you like better. In corollary, you probably are more attentive toward these people when they talk [111, 159].

Observe others as they join groups. Where do they choose to sit? If there is choice of seats, do their selections reveal anything about their preferences among the people already seated? (If an acquaintance who has shared little mutual liking with you selects a seat close to you, watch out! He may be seeking an opportunity to ask a favor!) Can you determine by the way members of a group subtly approach and avoid each other, who are probably socially very likable or important?

In a conversation group ,the person most frequently addressed directly and looked at by speakers is almost certainly the best liked, most admired, or most respected member. In a social group of supposed peers, a person whom nobody addresses or even notices may well feel left out and lonely.

Notice where people look when they are talking and when they are allegedly listening. Notice their postures as they talk and as they listen. How much abbreviated approach and avoidance can you infer from eye contact and posture? How much liking and disliking? How much interest and disinterest?

The immediacy concept has also been subtly, though probably unintentionally, applied in some social rules [143]. For example, the host customarily sits at the head of a long rectangular table. Should he sit at a longer side of the table, he could have eye contact only with the people across from him and could not easily look at those sitting on his side of the table. From the head position at the table, he can distribute his attention more evenly among the entire group. Such attention is of course conveyed in terms of his eye contact and his conversation. Since the people who are seated farthest away from him are less likely to be attended to even with this seating arrangement, the guest of honor, who rates extra courtesies and attention, usually is seated next to the host, customarily to his right.

Observe the nonverbal behavior when you are among strangers at a large party. If you see someone interesting whom you want to meet, casually make your way to a spot within five feet of him (or her) and be alert for nonverbal cues. Eye contact—better yet, a smile—encourages more direct approach. Someone who approaches you, looking in your direction, and not avoiding eye contact, may be trying to find a suitable opening to introduce himself. If you welcome the approach, return his look, smile at him. If you are not interested, look, or turn, away. Of course, some boors (who may also be bores) will fail to get the message.

Goodbyes and handshakes

The important and prominent role of silent messages in the communication of feelings in social situations is also evident when people say goodbye to each other. Since departure decreases immediacy, it usually is easy enough to assess people's feelings from their willingness to terminate an interaction. In a conversation group, one of the participants may begin to talk less, start looking around, or actually stand up and move about. These signs of restlessness constitute abbreviated departing movements. If a number of participants in the conversation start exhibiting these behaviors, for all practical purposes, the discussion is over.

At the conclusion of a social evening in a private home, the process of saying "goodnight" varies. I have noticed consistent differences among different friends in their handling of this last part of an evening, as hosts or as guests. Some guests repeatedly say, "I've really got to go," but remain seated and keep introducing new topics into the conversation. Others get up abruptly and leave. Some hosts act as though the parting is made with great reluctance. For others, the farewell is always brief, no matter who it is they see to the door.

In more or less formal situations, social amenities sometimes make it more difficult to interpret nonverbal messages. In most unstructured situations, postponement of the actual moment of parting probably does signal genuine reluctance, whereas abrupt departure does indicate willingness to decrease the immediacy. The amenities dictate that guests in a home exhibit positive enjoyment of the hospitality and that hosts exhibit equally positive delight in the company of guests in the home. The guest who says he must go, then stays on, may be genuinely reluctant to lessen the immediacy of contact with liked people; however, he may be reluctant only because his host might interpret early departure as an expression of displeasure with hospitality. A host who prolongs farewells may be genuinely reluctant to end the social encounter, or he may be (dishonestly) sending the "proper" signals dictated by the amenities.

While saying goodbye, as in saying "hello," the handshake can also signify different degrees of immediacy. In some cultures, in which a handshake is a must when people meet, it is difficult to detect feelings and attitudes from it. However, in the American culture and its many subcultures, customs involving the handshake are varied, there being only a few generally accepted rules such as the following two. The handshake is almost universally obligatory for men at time of introduction, but not at subsequent meetings. It is also the case that very few men or women would refuse to respond to a proffered hand. In situations in which it is not socially dictated, there is considerable variation from one person to another in the willingness to shake hands. Since a handshake involves bodily contact, it increases immediacy. Thus an individual's general level of preference for handshakes reflects how positively he feels toward others. Some happy male extroverts gladhand their way through life, shaking hands at every opportunity. Many women reach out selectively—to increase contact with others and thus transmit feelings about their acceptance of immediacy.

The style of handshake can also be very revealing. A firm handshake is more intense and is indicative of greater liking and warmer feelings, and politicians become quite adept at giving but (to protect their hands) not receiving such. A prolonged handshake is more immediate than a brief one, and in most situations is unacceptable—too intimate to be comfortable. We compensate for unavoidable excessive immediacy by use of other simultaneously occurring nonimmediate behaviors; for instance, when a stranger approaches to a close position, we tend to look away [7]. There is little we can do to compensate for the prolonged handshake; we loosen our own grip and if that cue is ignored we withdraw our hand.

A loosely clasping hand—or worse, a cold and limp one—is usually interpreted as indicating aloofness and unwillingness to become involved; we tend to react to a shake from this kind of hand with a shuddering thought: "What a cold fish!" The limp handshake generally is interpreted as signaling an unaffectionate and unfriendly nature; we take it as an indication of unwillingness to get involved, emotionally or otherwise. This implicit assumption of a pervasive style that includes verbal and nonverbal behaviors received support in some of the earliest research on nonverbal behavior [1].

Watch for handshakes as people meet. Are they all mutually spontaneous? If not, can you tell which person initiated the handshake? How do women, in general, differ from men in initiating and responding to handshakes? You may catch aborted handshakes, in which one person starts to offer his hand and *withdraws the offer. Can you determine the nonverbal cues that caused him to withdraw? In what circumstances do you spontaneously shake hands, or are reluctant to initiate one? Notice your own reactions to handshakes. How do you think others react to the clasp of your hand?*

Dance

The relationship between immediacy and liking is one of the three basic metaphors that we use to understand how a person's actions (rather than his speech) convey his feelings. (The other metaphors, power and responsiveness, will be discussed in later chapters.) It is very difficult to describe exhaustively all the behaviors that can draw on this metaphor to express feelings. Examples from dance illustrate the extensive scope of application of immediacy.

In a typical pattern of movement in ballet, one dancer runs away from his partner, taking a position at the farthest corner of the stage with his head turned away from the partner. This pattern, which dramatically shows a desire not only to increase distance from the other but also to avoid any possibility of looking at him, is used to portray anger or hurt feelings.

Other movements toward or away from others in a dance are used to convey shades of positive and negative feelings respectively, depending on the other qualities that accompany these movements. For example, a slow, lyrical movement toward another person shows warmth and love, whereas a faster and lighter rhythmic approach conveys a happy and more playful feeling. When a dancer playfully moves toward and away from her partner, she conveys the underlying ambivalence that is associated with teasing—the feelings that motivate teasing are a mixture of desire and apprehension.

In a group dance, smooth, flowing movements of the dancers as they come together can show a congenial and harmonious quality that is also associated with warmth. Dancers bunched together in a close group, making short, erratic, percussive movements of the arms, legs, and torsos outward, away from the group but always returning to it, communicate conflict and yet a desire to maintain their close relationship.

Self-disclosure

The tendency to position oneself closer to others and to reveal more of oneself is closely related to a greater tolerance of and preference for immediacy. For instance, in psychotherapy interviews, if there is no desk between the therapist and his patient, some women constantly tug on their skirts in a desperate effort to cover as much as possible [41], and such patients usually are also unable to sustain eye contact and frequently avoid it by looking at the floor. These expressions are blatant announcements to the therapist of a fact he already knows—few patients *want* to reveal themselves in an initial interview.

Our facial expressions, eyes, and postures, in addition to uncovered parts of our bodies, all communicate information about ourselves and our feelings [38]. People in the same culture [76, 162], but especially those from different cultures or ethnic groups [5, p. 362; 12; 70, Chapter 11; 167], differ in terms of the amount of self-disclosure they characteristically allow. Some people carefully and consistently guard against such self-disclosure by physically keeping their distance and appearing uninvolved. When forced to be close to others, they look away and sometimes shrink physically from the very threat of contact, giving the impression of acute anxiety and discomfort. Their inability to reveal themselves to others or to seek information from others through eye contact and proximity is indicative of unfriendliness, coldness, and, in some extreme cases, fear or antisocial qualities.

Characteristic differences in levels of self-disclosure are also revealed by the ways in which people handle their physical environment. An office door may generally be left open or kept closed; the window coverings in a house or an apartment may generally be drawn or left open. Almost always, given free choice, the occupants of offices or dwelling units show a consistent preference for one arrangement or the other. Where there is no organizational policy dictating that doors be open or closed, some persons almost invariably leave the doors to their offices open; others almost invariably work behind closed doors. Some dwellers in an apartment complex leave their curtains open, even though there are frequent passersby who can look inside; others seldom if ever open their curtains.

Individuals and families usually have characteristic levels of preference for self-disclosure in terms of how they deal with nudity or use bathrooms [76, 162]. In some families, the door to the bathroom is left open even when in use, whereas in others, there is a taboo against it being open even when the bathroom is not in use. In some families, varying stages of undress including complete nudity are taken as a matter of course as family members move about within the house. In others, family members hasten to dress as soon as they return from the beach wearing swim suits. For these people, the near nudity acceptable on a beach seems inappropriate and uncomfortable in a home.

We can only speculate about the effects of family attitudes toward self-disclosure on children's attitudes and ideas about people in general. Does a child who grows up in a family where nudity is an everyday phenomenon also learn to be more open about his feelings? Is this child better able to have intimate relationships through a superior ability to express his fears, aspirations, likes, and dislikes?

Communication media

Few of us enjoy bringing unwelcome news to another. We do not like to be disliked even temporarily, and few people like the bearer of bad news. The news need not be of death or major tragedy. A parent may have to be informed of a child's failure in school. A worker may have to be laid off. A request may have been denied.

The next time you have to bring unwelcome information to someone, note your eye contact, distance, and bodily orienta-

tion relative to him as you break the news. You will probably tend to avoid looking directly at him, and will stand at a distance, oriented to one side—all of which decrease your immediacy with him.

Sometimes it is so difficult to be the bearer of bad news that we select an intermediary (if we can find one), in order to minimize the immediacy of our contact with the person receiving the news. We may resort to the telephone, or preferably a letter, to avoid a face-to-face confrontation.

On the other hand, when we bring good news, most of us welcome immediacy; we are happy to present good tidings in face-to-face confrontation. If we cannot perform our function in person, we call by telephone; if we cannot phone, we write. To transmit good news, an intermediary is a last resort.

Thus, the positiveness of our feelings about what we have to say can determine the immediacy with which we elect to say it [107, 170]. The "Dear John" letter and the firing of an employee through an intermediary or by a curt formal memo or letter instead of in a face-to-face confrontation are illustrations of the choice of a less immediate medium when there is considerable discomfort about the message.

A written message from a friend who lives in the same city may be quite appropriate—a formal invitation or a birthday card, for example. It may be necessary because you are never at home when he can phone. Excluding these possibilities, it may indicate that he feels uncomfortable about the contents of his message and cannot bring himself to say them to you on the telephone or in person.

In terms of the immediacy that they afford, media can be ordered from most immediate to least: face-to-face situation, picturephone, telephone, telegram, letter, direct intermediary, and, least immediate of all, a carefully leaked message that is transmitted through an intermediary. If a letter and a telegram are of the same length, the telegram is more immediate because transmission is faster. Usually, although letters take longer in transmission, they can be more detailed; the choice between mail and telegraph and the significance of this choice therefore depend on the length of the essential part of the message.

In making comparisons of immediacy, it is important to distinguish situations in which a free exchange of information is possible from those in which long delays are interposed between one-way messages. When two different means of communication use the same medium, the one that allows faster feedback is considered more immediate. Surface mail is less immediate than air mail; a televised communication is less immediate than one on the picturephone in which an exchange is possible; an audiorecorded message is less immediate than a conversation on the telephone.

The message leaked through an intermediary is not only the least immediate but also the least reliable—it may never reach the person it is intended for. Frequently there are good reasons for avoiding more immediate and more reliable means of transmission. Sometimes we do not want to be personally and directly involved with delivery of the message, or perhaps we cannot be directly involved without drawing unnecessary or unseemly attention to the message or to ourselves. In all cases, the use of the intermediary is motivated by discomfort about conveying the particular message to a particular other. In one kind of situation we may leak a criticism of, or warning to, a friend or coworker. In another situation we may leak a compliment or praise that we are unwilling or unable to deliver more directly since it might be construed as ingratiating. Similarly, we may sometimes brag a bit, with the thought that our virtues may be brought to the attention of someone we want to impress. There are some good experimental methods available to test this idea that, in attempts at ingratiation involving the communication of our own good qualities to a higher-status other, we prefer to use less immediate channels of communication [75].

Similarly, notification to unsuccessful applicants is usually made by letter—if at all—even to persons in the same city. In contrast, notification to the winner of an award or to the successful applicant for a position is often made by phone—perhaps coast to coast at person-to-person rates. Even in negotiations for positions on very high levels—presidencies of corporations and universities or high-level governmental posts—acceptance is generally communicated by phone, whereas rejection is transmitted by the less immediate medium of a letter.

In many situations, responses to applications are made by letter —for example, applications for admission to colleges or for employment in large organizations. The nature of the answer may be evident simply from the thickness of the letter or package sent to the applicant. A larger package, which includes a lengthier communication and involves greater immediacy [106], is more likely to be the bearer of good news. A brief paragraph of response may start with "We regret . . ."

A short letter of recommendation may well be a means of "damning with faint praise." A letter that says in effect, "I think Joe Doakes is very mature, intelligent, and diligent," without elaboration, reflects a lack of involvement and a desire to take care of the chore quickly. The writer feels that he must say something positive about the person in question, for whom he has little liking [97].

Within a few years picturephones will become available for common use. Of course, some people will be determined to install picturephones in offices and homes as soon as they are available for prestige and status reasons; however, many in the vanguard of users will be persons who have greater preference for the immediacy that a picturephone affords in dealing with others at a distance. So, we can expect that more affiliative persons will purchase and use these phones earlier than those who are less gregarious.

As compared with a telephone, a picturephone not only helps increase intimacy but also improves the accuracy of communication [130]. This is especially true for persons who make liberal use of facial expressions and gestures in expressing themselves. In a telephone conversation, such visual cues are not available to the listener. Since facial expressions and gestures can be an important part of the effort to explain an idea or to convey a feeling, the received message is at best incomplete and possibly even misleading [130].

Even when a person knows that his facial expressions are not available to his listener, he does not stop using them or automatically start to compensate for their absence by using other behaviors. In one of our studies, we asked the subjects to produce sarcastic messages that were to be audiorecorded [117].

Many subjects who tried to say something sarcastically consistently relied on their facial expressions; when we listened to the recordings from these subjects, we found them totally lacking in sarcasm. Even when this was pointed out, these persons still were unable to get across a sarcastic expression in their tone of voice—they continued to use their facial expressions.

In contrast, other subjects were very adept in producing sarcastic messages with negative vocal expressions (that is, tone of voice). One of the girls who was an actress excelled in this and could also readily say negative words such as "scram" or "don't" with positive vocal expressions to produce messages with overall positive impact. Most people cannot get this effect when the listener can only hear them, but considerably more can do so if they can be seen as well as heard.

Another study showed that our subjects did indeed differ considerably in their ability to express positive or negative feelings in their vocal or facial expressions [177]. The introduction of picturephones should be of considerable value to persons who are unable to use vocal cues and therefore rely heavily on facial expressions in their conversation.

A politician's image

In communication by television or picturephone, the portion of the speaker visible on the receiver set indicates different degrees of immediacy. For example, if during a televised address to the nation, the President of the United States sits beside his desk so that he is fully visible, the effect is more immediate than when he sits behind his desk, with only his head and shoulders visible. In the latter case, the address seems more impersonal and more distant—more formal.

In his face-to-face encounters with constituents who visit him in his office, an elected official (like anyone else who works in an office) can increase or decrease immediacy by arrangement of furniture. He can position his desk so that his visitors must sit away from him, on the opposite side of the desk. This kind of arrangement seems more impersonal than one in which the desk is placed against a wall and both persons can sit facing, and fully visible to, each other. The latter arrangement not only allows people to sit closer but also increases the amount of sensory input that each receives from the other. Thus, most visitors will tend to judge the situation as informal and the host as receptive, and they will feel more at ease, more comfortable. In contrast, when the desk is between the two, many visitors will feel less at ease in the conversation and may become unfavorably aware of a covert stress on the difference in status.

In watching war movies, I have yet to see a German or Russian officer portrayed in his office with his desk placed against the wall so that he is fully exposed to his visitors. On the contrary, the officer usually sits behind a huge desk, in front of which his visitors stand. Perhaps this is only the artist's intuitive touch to bring out the stereotype of an authoritarian culture and to symbolize unconcerned and distant leadership.

The behavior of a candidate for political office when he is on the campaign trail is usually consistent with his appearances on TV or the way in which he elects to have his office arranged. Many American voters viewed Adlai Stevenson as a distant and aloof intellectual. He was not the kind of candidate who could pretend to enjoy rubbing shoulders with mobs of potential voters, touching and being touched. The impression he gave to the electorate was largely due to his tendency to be nonimmediate. In contrast, Lyndon Johnson's image as a candidate, Senator, President, or a private person, has been one of exceptional immediacy. On the campaign trail, he had a need, as he put it, to "press the flesh," to shake thousands of hands, to touch and be touched. His lapel-twisting tactics as Senate Majority Leader may have seemed excessively immediate to some, but on the whole they proved effective in accomplishing his purposes. His use of the telephone aroused much comment, particularly in the early days of his Presidency—there was no precedent for such frequent Presidential use of the more immediate telephone communications.

The nonverbal style of a person in the political arena has little to do with his political ideology or his intellect, but it can and does have a tremendous effect on the way in which he is received, how much he is liked, and especially the kinds of people he appeals to. Thus, as far as the electorate at large is concerned, the public image of an "intellectual" is determined more by manner of dress, the infrequency and quality of contacts with constituents, and aloof and distant mannerisms than by academic background or rational powers. On the other hand, the style of a politician who has considerable intellectual skill may be carefully cultivated to appeal to a constituency of anti-intellectual types. Such a quality can be conveyed by informality of speech, a greater willingness to assume close positions to people around him, more frequent gesturing when talking, and greater expressiveness of his face and postures.

The microenvironment

A friend tells me that on one occasion during her visit to Soviet Russia, she had to visit a People's Militia (police) Station. From the entrance to the office, a long red carpet extended to a giant desk at the other end of the room, behind which sat the officer in charge. There was a smaller desk placed in front of this large one. A subordinate officer sat to one side, and the interpreter sat at the other side and slightly to the front of this smaller desk. Seated along the walls on chairs were members of the People's Council.

This microenvironment (that is, interior space of a building) dramatically shows the way in which furniture arrangement can be used to enforce varying degrees of nonimmediacy and thereby highlight status differences. The officer of highest status was least accessible; the lower-ranking officer and the interpreter who sat alongside the smaller desk, rather than behind it, were more accessible; finally, the People's Council who sat alongside the walls were most accessible, since a visitor occasionally sat with them while waiting for decisions to be made.

As we will see in the next chapter, limiting the immediacy of contact is a very effective means of conveying higher status. The furniture arrangement in the People's Militia Station certainly accomplished this purpose by highlighting status differences of those within it.

In a somewhat different context, a large office may strike us as cold and impersonal instead of friendly and casual, depending on its furniture arrangement. A bank may include many partitions to separate customers from officers and employees and a regimented arrangement of furniture (side-by-side seating alongside a wall or rows of desks for employees who face each other's backs). This design minimizes immediacy of contacts between customers and employees, thereby creating an impersonal and formal atmosphere. My favorite bank is about half the size of most, and all the officers are seated out in the open, with an irregular arrangement of their desks. Only the tellers are separated from the customers. Also, lounge chairs are placed around circular tables for the customers and coffee is available. The accessibility of the employees, the small size, and the less formal arrangement of the furniture give this bank a very pleasant and comfortable quality.

Often the arrangement of furniture in a professional office is haphazard and left primarily to chance, and, in some situations, the result can have quite detrimental effects on professional effectiveness [122; 123; 160, Chapter 6]. For situations in which it is important to establish good rapport and a relationship of trust with clients or patients, a nonimmediate seating arrangement may be quite a handicap. For example, a psychotherapist who deals with patients across a desk may be ineffective in helping some who cannot tolerate the large distances or others who even mistakenly attribute the coldness of the office to the therapist.

Consider various offices you have visited—for example, those of school principals, professors, managers, doctors, lawyers. Was there any relation between the way the furniture was arranged and the general friendliness of the host?

Some restaurants make us feel restrained, inclined to talk in whispers. In such restaurants the tables more often than not are placed far apart from each other and arranged in a rigid pattern, and the place is uncomfortably quiet because of the absence of music. This formal atmosphere is further enhanced by the starchy and pompous manners and costumes of the waiters. Some people are prepared to sacrifice comfort for an exceptionally well-prepared meal. Most of us, however, feel that we are being watched and expected to exhibit extraordinary good manners; we end up feeling tense and unable really to enjoy our food.

To create a cozy and comfortable atmosphere in which people can relax and enjoy their food and company, an irregular arrangement of tables placed close together seems more effective. Background music helps further by giving people the feeling that they can converse comfortably without being overheard by others at adjacent tables. This design promotes the feeling of greater intimacy and is considered cozy because of the smaller distances; but, since conversations remain private, customers do not feel self-conscious about being seated very close to strangers. From a managerial viewpoint, the effective and economical use of floor space yields more income per square foot. This intimate arrangement does have drawbacks—the noise level from the music and others' conversations can become intolerably high.

The interior design of cafeterias, bars, restaurants, or discothèques not only influences the general atmosphere but also has a direct effect in encouraging or discouraging conversation among the people who patronize them. If people can somehow be induced to assume positions close to one another and to orient so that they can comfortably have eye contact, then conversation is far more likely to occur than if they select seats that are far apart or are oriented so there is little possibility of eye contact [122; 123; 160].

Thus, furniture arrangement determines seating choice and therefore the quality of social interaction. A large number of small tables discourages conversation among strangers because there is a great reluctance to join a stranger at his table. Even though people might go to a place in hopes of meeting others, such an arrangement will lead them to sit at separate tables, strongly discouraging contacts [160]. Of course, some people prefer such an arrangement because they do not wish to interact with strangers.

If the purpose is to encourage strangers to converse with each other, the side-by-side arrangement of chairs along a long table or a bar counter is not effective, either. In such a setting, people are more likely to sit immediately next to each other; but the side-by-side seating arrangement hinders them from comfortably having eye contact, which is a necessary part of conversation. Further, even when swivel stools are used, in this arrangement a gregarious stranger has a choice of talking only to one of two persons at his right or left. If he is not interested in either one of them or if his friendly gambits are rebuffed, he is handicapped unless he can move to another location at the counter.

One alternative to these two arrangements would be a zig-zag counter with people sitting on both sides. This eliminates the problem of self-consciousness that is associated with joining a stranger at his table, since counters are made to be used by many people who may be total strangers to each other. Further, the zig-zag arrangement of the counter allows a friendly loner to sit within comfortable speaking distance of two or three others. This is possible since the angular arrangement of the zig-zag counter allows one to sit close, but at an angle to others. Sitting at an angle counteracts the immediacy of sitting close, which would be uncomfortable if one were to face a stranger directly across the counter [8]. The use of swivel stools with a zig-zag arrangement increases flexibility in that each person can turn in several directions to address any one of the several persons who may be sitting closest to him. Figure 1 illustrates one such basic module that can be combined with many others to achieve not only high-density seating, but also a very casual and friendly atmosphere.

Notice how person D can take a seat very close to C and initially face the counter, thereby assuming an indirect orientation of approximately 90 degrees to C (that is, they would each need to turn through an angle of about 45 degrees to face each other). In this way, through slight turns, D has a choice of conversing with A, C, F, or E. He might even be able to address B, if they together turn a total of about 270 degrees—however, this is a less likely possibility.

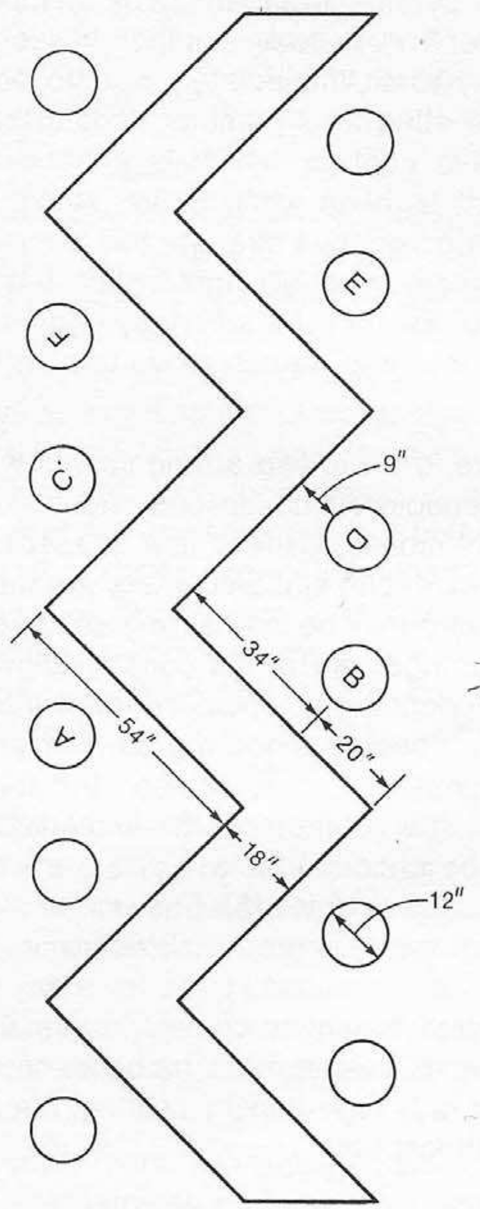

Figure 1

A basic module for zig-zag furniture arrangements in public eating, drinking, and entertainment spots

Estimated overall space taken up by this table is 104½ square feet (5½ feet by 19 feet). To accommodate the twelve persons at square tables (assuming 6½ feet by 6½ feet per table, including seating space) would require 126¾ square feet, provided every seat of these square tables was occupied—a very unlikely possibility in actual fact. The zig-zag arrangement is therefore superior in terms of its economical use of space.

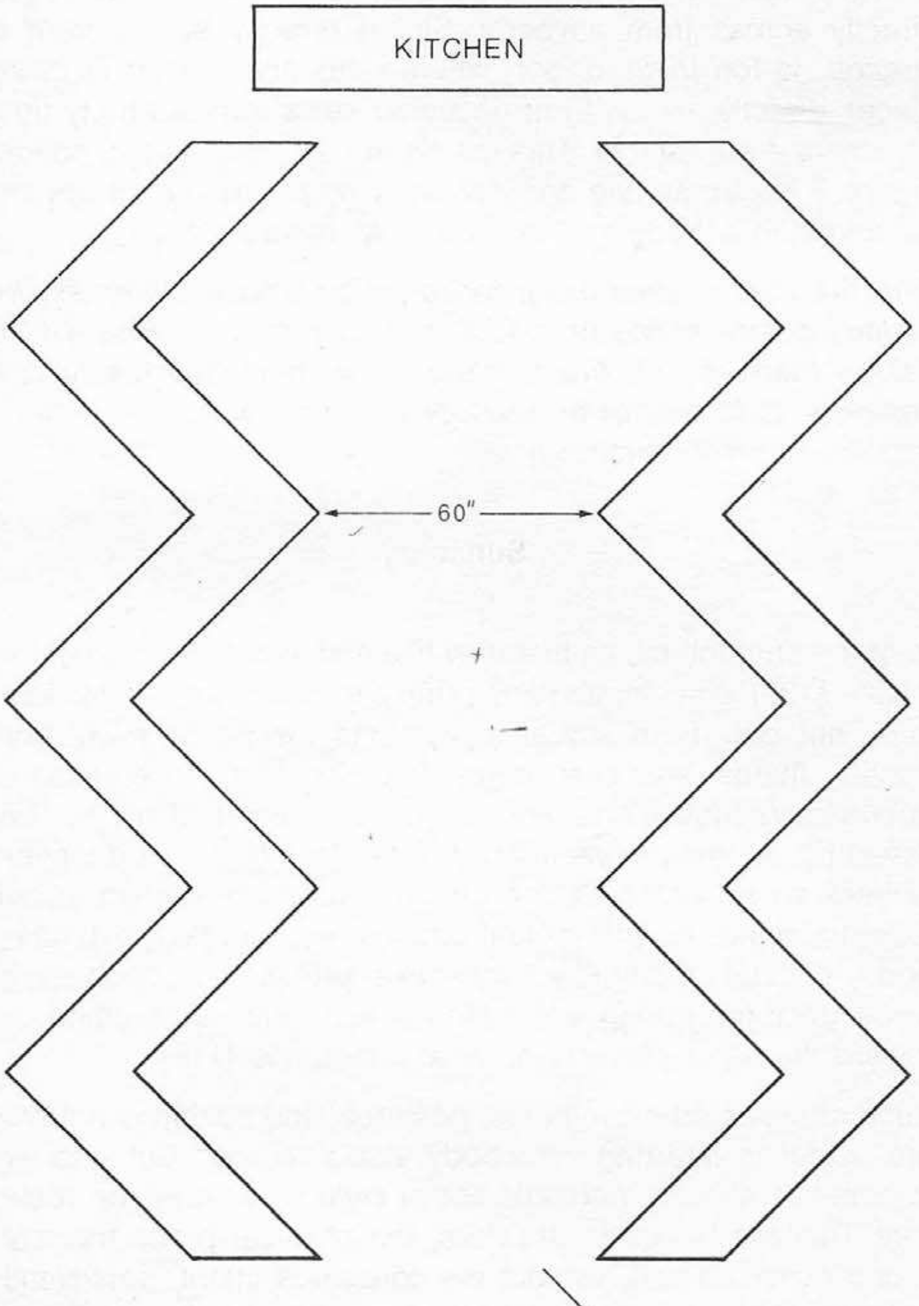
KITCHEN
60″
ENTRANCE TO RESTAURANT

Figure 2

One application of the zig-zag modules in a small restaurant

The zig-zag counter has the advantage over a straight one at which people sit on both sides because nobody has to sit directly across from anybody. Sitting directly across from a stranger is too forward; and when a straight counter is used, places directly across from occupied seats remain empty until no others are available. This results in ineffective use of space. Figure 2 illustrates one application in which such modules are combined to provide seating in a small restaurant.

With the idea of promoting conversation among strangers, try various combinations of modules such as that in Figure 1 to design the furniture arrangement for a committee meeting, a university cafeteria, or an outdoor cafe in a park.

Summary

People approach things that they like and avoid others that they dislike [135]. This immediacy principle allows us to infer feelings, not only from actual movements toward or away from people, things, and even ideas, but also from observation of abbreviated movements and gestures. Greater liking is conveyed by standing close instead of far, leaning forward instead of back while seated, facing directly instead of turning to one side, touching, having mutual gaze or eye contact, extending bodily contact as during a handshake, prolonging goodbyes, or using gestures during a greeting which imply a reaching out toward the other person who is at a distance [113].

Such abbreviated movements, postures, and positions not only are useful in inferring somebody else's feelings but also are informative about a person's social style when they are recurrent. Besides his own behaviors, the physical props that surround a person can, without his conscious intent, persistently influence his relationships with others. The furniture arrangement inside the house, the visual accessibility of the interior to outsiders (such as when doors or curtains are left open), or the height of a fence can all affect one's social image and thereby encourage or discourage immediacy of contacts.

Suggested readings

Discussions of typical immediacy (or what Edward T. Hall refers to as proxemic) behaviors in different cultures and the ways in which such behaviors relate to other aspects of each culture are found in works by Edward T. Hall [68, 69, 70]. Experimental studies related to immediacy are reviewed in Chapter 3 of Michael Argyle's *Social Interaction* [5] and in my report "Significance of Posture and Position in the Communication of Attitude and Status Relationships" [111]. Specific experimental methods and results are given in my report on "Nonverbal Communication" presented at the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation in 1971.

2

Power

Office doors and differences in visitors' approaches to them offer demonstrations of the operation of the power metaphor. A visitor may enter without knocking; he may knock briefly and immediately enter; he may knock and wait to be invited in. Stripped of exceptions due to social training (or lack of it) this series of approaches correlates with decreasing degrees of familiarity or with increasing status of the persons visited. If the door to an office is open, a comparable series would include simply walking in and taking a seat, hesitating at the threshold for word or gesture of invitation before entering and immediately taking a seat without waiting for specific invitation to do so, or stopping at the threshold until asked to come in and waiting again until invited to take a seat. Again, the first example in this series illustrates the behavior of a close friend or a visitor who is of higher status and knows the person he is visiting. The other examples illustrate the behavior of a visitor who is on less intimate terms with or who ranks lower in a status hierarchy than the person visited.

These examples show that people behave in a more formal and ritualized fashion in situations involving status differences than they do when interacting with their peers. The underlying principle here, which is based on the *power metaphor*, is that persons of higher status determine the degree of immediacy permitted in their interactions with others. A person of lower status has less right to increase his immediacy with someone of higher status than vice versa [71; 159, p. 146].

The clue to status differences is the degree of hesitation and discomfort shown by the visitor at each stage as he is about to increase his immediacy to the person he visits. If the status differential is significant, he must wait for permission before he makes any major move in coming closer, or risk offending the higher-status other. He will be hesitant to presume familiarity by casually dropping into a seat as this implies relaxation and an intention to stay on. Indeed, even when invited to sit, the visitor will still behave in a way that is consistent with his status in the situation as he sees it. If there is more than one visitor's chair, he will tend to sit at a distance from his host. On the contrary, if the two are intimate or are peers, the visitor will feel free to take a seat without being invited to do so, and close to the person he visits [89].

In the American culture, we joke about status symbols, but we are as a general rule uneasily reluctant to discuss our own status relative to others. There are status differences even though our mythology informs us that all men are equal. As these examples show, even the simplest and most common aspects of social life are permeated by actions rather than words that take cognizance of status differences among the participants. More generally, when it is not socially permissible to verbalize a feeling or attitude (in this case, awareness of status differences), actions may reveal the proscribed messages; and if we focus on what we see rather than on the words we hear, we may learn how others really feel. Thus psychoanalysts have sought to understand the unverbalized (or "repressed") feelings of their patients [20, 34, 35, 36, 58, 145].

The ways in which status differences affect people's interactions tend to be even more pronounced in the more authoritarian and traditional Middle Eastern or Oriental cultures. In these cultures, there is an important and pervasive influence on nonverbal behaviors due to the greater and more open respect for tradition, the wisdom of old age, and social position. People not only talk about but also act in accordance with certain well-defined social roles corresponding to their status. This reminds me of an instructor at the University of Teheran who once visited me. His behavior strongly emphasized the extreme importance that is placed on status in the Middle East. Throughout our meeting, he spoke softly, almost in a whisper. He did not sit down until I asked him to; and, at the end, instead of turning around to walk out, he backed out of the room. The low volume of his voice metaphorically emphasized the lower status that he felt; his backing out showed the reluctance to "show me his back," a behavior that epitomizes a humble and respectful attitude. As we will see later, the metaphor that underlies communications of status is power, which includes strength and fearlessness. Thus the low volume and passive behaviors of my visitor are analogous to weakness, and the reluctance to turn his back toward me parallels fear in the metaphor.

In the Middle East, the uneasiness about turning one's back even on friends is illustrated by the formalities of going through an entrance. There are many arguments at thresholds of entrances, as each of two peers insists that the other should enjoy the privilege of going first. The admiration in a friendship is constantly reiterated through such acts, which convey one's humble and respectful attitude toward his friends and his elders. Even when one of a pair does finally agree to go first, he tends to orient himself sideways as he goes through the entrance to avoid turning his back to the other.

On occasion, some very subtle vestigial examples of such behaviors crop up in Western cultures. For example, the courtesy of allowing the other person to be the first to walk through a narrow entrance is comparable to the Middle Easterner's conscious aversion to showing his back to a person in a higher position. A man falls back to let a woman precede him; a junior shows deference to his senior in age or position. Such courtesies, which tend to occur only in formal relationships (that is, those involving status differences) are basically comparable with the "backing out" behaviors in Middle Eastern and Oriental cultures. On the other hand, the "backing out" analogy does not apply in the American armed forces, which are permeated by awareness of status differences to an excruciating degree. In formal situations, when an enlisted man or junior officer is dismissed from the presence of a superior officer, he salutes smartly, does an about-face (turning his back fully), and marches away. In this context there are many other more obvious ways in which status differences are conveyed. Thus when there is a clear understanding of who is in charge and who has to listen to orders, the subtle cues that convey status differences become less important.

You may have opportunity to observe interpersonal interactions in a situation that involves differences in status among a number of persons who work in individual offices. If so, note how persons behave as they visit various offices. Who barges into which offices without waiting for invitation? Who waits at the thresholds of which offices for specific invitation? Notice also how loud or soft a person knocks when he visits someone whose door is closed. Is the knocking softer and less frequent, as though with some reluctance, when the person being visited is of higher status?

Our experiments have shown directly that more submissive persons speak in a softer voice in interacting with a stranger [134]. The implication of smallness by a low voice volume is only one example of a more general metaphorical relationship between large size and power or status. I remember a concert in which all the Oriental musicians were seated on the floor, facing the audience. At the time of applause, when the musicians bowed, the principal performer, who had been introduced as a person of exceptional musical ability, did not bow quite so low as the others of that musical ensemble. The latter, who were of lesser skill and status, showed their acceptance of their relatively lower status by bowing to a lower position. On some occasions, an analogue of this phenomenon may be evident also among American actors, dancers, or opera singers during curtain calls.

Body relaxation

In Western cultures, particularly in the United States, the connotations of democracy run counter to an emphasis on status considerations; and there are few overt manifestations of acceptance of status differences. However, in subtle ways, we reveal our arrogance in higher status and our humility in a lower position. Experimental observations in this culture show that body relaxation, which is a much more subtle cue than the ones noted above, is one very important indicator of status. When two strangers meet, the more relaxed one is probably accepted by both as being of higher status [62, 104, 111, 126]. In our contemporary culture, relaxation is a reminder of the fearlessness of the powerful in times when power (and consequent status) involved life and death. One who is powerful, that is, of higher status, can afford to relax, whereas the weak must remain watchful and tense.

These experimental observations in Western cultures also correlate with certain rules of etiquette in formal situations [143]. Since standing is less relaxed than a seated position, it is not surprising that a host seats his most honored guests first. When there are more extreme status differences, guests of lower status remain standing throughout whereas the more distinguished guests are seated. Examples of these are seen in formal political situations in which some attendants of a high-level official remain standing. Similarly, participants in a state dinner rise from their seats when the official party arrives and remain standing until the official party is seated. According to Emily Post [143], in more casual everyday situations, people of lower status (for example, teen-agers) are supposed to stand up to greet their superiors (for example, anyone over thirty) or whenever they wish to show respect. However, such arbiters of social custom are not often consulted by today's young people.

I recently visited a young dentist, who, as he worked on my teeth, talked a great deal about his "partner," an older man and an internationally distinguished dentist. One day, while the younger dentist was working on my teeth, a man came to the door to talk to him about some routine matter. Although I could not see the man who entered, I could see my dentist clearly. As I heard the visitor's voice, I noticed changes in the posture of my dentist. He moved forward in his seat, leaned forward, moved his knees together, and clasped his hands. These movements were significantly different from his behavior when others stopped at the doorway to talk to him. I had no idea who his visitors were; however, clued by his unusually tense posture during this last exchange, I felt confident enough to say, "That must have been your partner." This was indeed the case.

The noticeable change in his posture more than normally illustrated the idea that increased postural tension (which relates to fear and watchfulness in the power metaphor) occurs when a person addresses someone of higher status. In this situation, the young dentist was quite sensitive to the professional prominence of his partner. The two men had almost certainly never discussed and contrasted their respective professional positions. However, the younger man's postural behavior gave clear indication of his recognition of where he stood in the relationship.

Body tension is not the only abbreviated behavior that is part of a fear reaction signaling lower status. Frequent blinking can also be part of a fear reaction and, when it occurs in normal conversation, can imply weakness and submissiveness. The person who blinks frequently seems to be saying "Please be gentle. Don't disagree with me or hurt my feelings" (in the power metaphor: "Please don't hit me!").

The prerogative to increase immediacy

It is easy enough to picture an older man in this culture encouraging his younger business partner by patting him on the back; but it is very difficult to visualize this situation reversed, that is, with the younger man patting his older and more senior partner. This illustrates a second important way in which status considerations regulate our silent messages. For two persons of different status, the prerogative to assume a position more immediate to the other belongs to the one with higher status.

In almost any social grouping, there is a status hierarchy, which the newcomer implicitly discovers and respects. In the context of a working situation, minor status differences may not be immediately evident, but one differential is obvious. The head man, the person with hire-fire power, has highest status in the group. The newcomer in the situation may or may not ever have social contact off the job with his superior; but, if he does, the higher-status person initiates the closer relationship. The supervisor of the steno pool may suggest to a typist that they have lunch together. A foreman may invite a machinist to have a beer at the local tavern after the shift ends. A corporation president may invite a junior executive to a cocktail party in his home. There are acceptable exceptions in particular situations, but as a general rule the lower-ranked person does not presume to initiate greater immediacy.

For the junior employee, it would seem (and would probably be) inappropriate to take this step to increase the immediacy of his relationship with his boss. So, if the superior bypasses this initiative to a more friendly relationship, then the chances are that the two persons will never socialize together off the job.

A related implicit rule is that when the person of higher status provides such an opportunity to increase immediacy, the employee is under heavy obligation to accept the invitation. Classically, to reject such an invitation is disrespectful; pragmatically, rejection is probably impolitic for one who wants to do well in his job. So, when a person of lower status is offered greater immediacy, he generally accepts.

A junior employee may be brash enough to take the initiative to increase immediacy even though he does not have that prerogative. In this instance, a rejection of the invitation is also embarrassing but has different connotations. When several such invitations are turned down, the obvious implication is that the superior has a distinct desire to maintain and enforce status differences as well as formality in the relationship.

Interestingly enough, these observations about how humans project status differences in their relationships seem to be upheld also in primates. In watching a colony of chimpanzees at a zoo, I noticed that the male head of this colony, who was obviously larger and older than the rest of them, was hardly ever approached by the adolescent males who were constantly playing and wrestling with each other. They especially avoided looking in his direction and tensed slightly as they passed by him, while he remained relaxed and glanced casually in their direction. These informal observations are corroborated in studies of baboons in their natural habitat. Among the baboons, high-status males were the focus of much activity and drew other members of the species, particularly females with young infants, into close interaction with them. The very young animals frequently approached the dominant male, or males, and interacted with them. As these infants became older, however, and entered into the status hierarchy, avoidance and discomfort in the presence of the high-status males were more likely to be observed.

In a similar way, many people in this culture will not spontaneously assume a close position to a person of higher status. Rather, they sit far away and face him directly [89]. However, a person of higher status may quite legitimately point out a closer chair to his visiting guest and ask him to take it, thereby permitting greater immediacy.

In this context, it is possible to analyze the significance of the position at the head of the table, which in most cultures goes to the most honored or highest-status person in the group. Someone sitting at the head of a rectangular table on the average has more ease in achieving eye contact with others at the table than one sitting along the side. For the latter, establishing eye contact, for instance with someone who sits along the same side of the table, involves bending forward and twisting the neck at an uncomfortable angle. Thus, the end position facilitates eye contacts for its occupant, thereby giving him more flexibility in regulating this aspect of immediacy with the others at the table. It is therefore not surprising that the position goes to persons of high status.

This kind of status significance led to the elaborate discussions of table shape for the Vietnam peace talks in Paris. Delegates from various nations and political groups at the talks did not wish to be judged implicitly as being of lower status through an assignment to certain positions at the table. Thus, the extensive preliminary negotiations required to decide on the shape of a table involved necessary compromises on the part of all parties regarding their respective status in the situation.

In addition to the choice of seating, which dictates the degree of closeness and directness of orientation, the initiation of a conversation is one common way of increasing immediacy. It is associated with more eye contact and more self-disclosure (expressing one's beliefs, attitudes, or feelings) than is generally possible without conversation. Generally, the option to increase or decrease immediacy by initiating or terminating a conversation is left to the person of high status. It is not surprising that when we are addressed by someone of higher status, we tend to be attentive and responsive; failure to do so would be a sign of disrespect. On the other hand, when a lower-status person initiates a conversation, the higher-status one is not required by custom or his own necessities to be overly responsive or to have eye contact with him. He can quite legitimately even turn to one side and seem to be listening without showing much reaction to what he hears.

A friend of mine, Tom, told of an incident that occurred while he was a graduate student. Tom went to the office of a very prominent psychologist in his department to present his ideas for a research project. The status implications in this situation were obvious, and Tom, who was very junior, did not expect to be favored by constant eye contact and verbal response from the senior psychologist, who sat facing away with his head down, quietly listening. There wasn't much reaction as Tom talked on, but this, as we have seen, is not unexpected, so he kept talking. Long before Tom finished his presentation, however, he was startled to hear a gentle snore. Fearing mutual embarrassment, Tom got up and quietly tiptoed away from the slumbering professor.

Sometimes status differences are also reflected in subtle aspects of speech [170]. In addressing a doctor of medicine, Robert French, we could say, "Dr. French" (but never "Mr. French"), "Robert," "Bob," or "Frenchie," with increasing degrees of familiarity or equality of status—the last possibly being used only by those who had known him as childhood buddies. Another more subtle example is the occurrence of the word "just" in a request. Use of "I just wanted to borrow this book" instead of "I want to borrow this book," implies a reluctance and hesitation in making the demand. The word "just" suggests an insignificant quality of the demand and is more likely to be used when the other person is of higher status. Even such a small request as this increases immediacy and is therefore made with some hesitation. The first statement can also imply "I just want the book and plan to leave quickly." This implication is consistent with our general concept in that it indicates a concern about the increased immediacy, if one were to stay on.

Consider some rules of etiquette from the standpoint of these principles that relate nonverbal behavior to status. Details of the explicit rules have been modified frequently, even since Emily Post first published her book on etiquette [143] in 1922. However, particularly for formal occasions, the rules still reflect their beginnings in social groupings concerned with power and status. For example, a couple of generations back one would not introduce himself to a person of high status, but rather first seek a letter of introduction from that person's equal. This legitimized the increased immediacy that was associated with the visit. Today, in seeking a visit with someone of high status, a less immediate means of contact, such as a letter or telephone call, is selected to make the request.

Such codes are derived from the etiquette that governed social behavior of court circles and aristocracy of seventeenth century France and England. The prescribed rules governing introductions (who is presented to whom) are based on relative status and provide some guidelines in a culture that is not characterized by profound concern about status—at least not a formalized overt concern. Few of us today live our social lives under conditions governed by formal rules of etiquette. Most of us are aware of power and status differences, and we act and react accordingly without too much help from handbooks on the subject.

Territoriality

As population density increases, territorial rights become an important prerogative of the higher-status persons. Experiments with animals have shown that higher-status animals visit more locations in their everyday activities than do those of lower status [25]. Thus, the higher-status members of a group are afforded a freedom of movement that is less available to those of lower status; furthermore, they have a designated area primarily for their own and their subordinates' use that is larger than areas available to lower-status members. The following comments of Edward T. Hall are instructive:

> Dominant animals tend to have larger personal distances than those which occupy lower positions in the social hierarchy, while subordinate animals have been observed to yield room to dominant ones. Glen McBride [96], an Australian professor of animal husbandry, has made detailed observations of the spacing of domestic fowl as a function of dominance. His theory of "social organization and behavior" has as a main element the handling of space. This correlation of personal distance and status in one form or another seems to occur throughout the vertebrate kingdom. It has been reported for birds and many mammals, including the colony of ground-living Old World monkeys at the Japanese Monkey Center near Nagoya [70, p. 14].

These findings can be summarized in terms of the following principle: Higher-status persons of a social group have access to more locations and have more power to increase or restrict immediacy vis-à-vis others than the lower-status members. There are many relevant examples from our everyday observations. For instance, among persons of different status within the same institution, such as a school, a business, or a hospital, higher-status individuals are assigned larger and more private quarters.

Think of how much effort it would take to get a personal interview with your boss, one of your state legislators, your governor, a senator, and the President of the United States, in that order. Also, think of how much easier it would be for successive persons in this list to regulate (that is, encourage or discourage) immediacy to himself.

Besides their contribution in showing a relation between higher status and increased access to a variety of locations or power to regulate others' use of space, experiments with animals have produced some interesting observations of the psychological advantage of having a territory. In one of his experiments, John Calhoun [25] used four interconnected pens and concentrated a large number of rats within them. In a very short time, one of the male rats took over one of these pens and drove out the other males who competed with him for status and for access to females. He was willing to tolerate the presence of other males in his compartment so long as they kept to themselves and did not bother the females. This rat even slept at the entrance to his pen so that he would be awakened by any intruders and could drive them off. Female rats in his pen lived out normal rat existences; there was a very high mortality rate among the female rats in the other crowded pens. There was also a considerable amount of abnormal behavior among the crowded rats: aggressive tail biting, unstable social hierarchies, transsexuality, and inadequate rearing of the young.

The dominant male that had taken over a pen was readily able to drive away the other males that attempted to enter his premises. He had established his own territory and harem where he was truly king. The fact that he had preserved for himself a more than adequate area seems to have given him not only the upper hand in maintaining his physical well-being but also a psychological advantage in warding off the intruders.

Indeed, evidence shows that there is a psychological advantage in being in one's own territory; an animal who fights in his own territory almost invariably wins. Even a physically stronger and larger animal becomes a less able fighter in another's territory [21, 88]. Thus, status is enhanced within one's own territory and others are reluctant to enter that area and be repulsed. Note that only those who threaten the status or power of the animal within the territory are repulsed. In the example of the rat who took over one pen, weaker males who did not interfere with his power in the situation were allowed to stay on. Among the baboons, the very young approached and played with the high-status males, but the adolescents who were beginning to enter the status hierarchy avoided immediacy to the latter. Finally, among birds, territorial defense is usually engaged in against birds with similar food needs and not against species with dissimilar food needs. Thus, when power and prerogatives are not threatened by the intruding animal, he is allowed to stay; otherwise, he is repulsed from a position of psychological advantage.

A man's home is his castle, and a person is indeed "boss" in his own territory. The psychological advantage that he has within his own territory is lost to his host when he goes visiting elsewhere. The higher a person's status, the greater is the area that he can claim as his own territory and therefore the greater is the likelihood that he will retain his psychological advantage in dealing with others. So, we have a two-sided relationship. People of high status claim and regulate access to larger territories and those who already have access to large territories are able thereby to assume the advantages of high status.

The following experimental findings are relevant in this context. Men were grouped into pairs and were socially isolated by having them live in a restricted space for a few days [2]. Personality test scores for members of these pairs were available, including a measure of each subject's level of dominance (an analogue of status). All three combinations of high-high, high-low, and low-low dominance pairs were observed in this setting. It was found that relative to the other pairs, high-high pairs tended to increase their territorial behavior over time. In these high-dominant pairs, each individual was more likely to develop exclusive use of locations and furniture in the area where the two were isolated. These findings are not surprising, since only in the high-high pairs was there a good chance that one member's dominant position would be threatened. Thus, the territorial behavior was a means that both used to cling to the limited psychological advantages provided by the setting.

Violated territories

The concept of territoriality goes beyond "staking out" a piece of land for oneself. People possess areas, such as desks, favorite chairs, rooms that are not to be intruded upon, or even particular seats at the eating table.

Sometime, if you care to risk an episode of unpleasantness, appropriate the favorite lounge chair of a friend whom you visit *in his home. Note his reactions, if he reveals them, and any change in his behavior toward you. I suggest this as an informal experiment that could be fun to discuss afterward with a good (and forgiving) friend, but I would be very reluctant to suggest such recurrent experiments with your family at home.*

Some of the most persistent irritants for people who live together are their occasional violations of each other's territorial rights. The magnitude of hurt feelings and irritations from such violations can be appreciated when we consider that even John Calhoun's rats under normal population density conditions showed a great deal of respect for each other's limited territorial rights within the same pen [25]. Only under conditions of excessive crowding within a pen did they begin to intrude on each other's territories so that these had to be maintained through fighting.

The analogy to the home environment can be striking. Crowding within the same dwelling unit can result in violation of inhabitants' territorial rights, and the violations may arouse hostility and aggression. When the crowding is excessive, the hostility becomes a frequent problem and grows into psychological and general social maladjustments. Chombart de Lauwe [28] found that in France when the number of people within a given dwelling unit approaches a point where less than 8 to 10 square meters of floor space are available per person, physical and social dysfunction suddenly doubles. At least part of the social disturbances resulting from crowding can be attributed to the violations of cohabitants' territorial rights and the associated recurrent problems.

On the other hand, insistence on territorial rights can be viewed as a way of minimizing stress, and therefore could be expected to be more forceful when people are under stress. In line with this, extreme territorial behavior was observed in Green Beret camps in Vietnam [19]. Each man had an area of his own within the camp and at certain times would prohibit entry into this area by anyone. There was an implicit understanding that at such times entry into the area would result in violent repulsion and such periods of seclusion of each soldier were carefully respected.

Even when the setting (for instance, the apartment or house) provides a considerable amount of space for the inhabitants, the violation of territorial rights is not necessarily precluded. Some people seem completely oblivious to another's implicit rights to a given part of a living space. Worse yet, their violations may be part of a more or less conscious attempt to take over more space and to assume a more dominant position in the situation. They move from one area of the house to another, successively claiming each from their victims. Such people seem to note a favorite "territory" (a working, music-listening, or reading area; a chair or desk); and, when it is vacated, they take it over. One of the maneuvers to claim space involves leaving some of their possessions in the appropriated area. We can tell a systematic take-over from simple carelessness by trying to reclaim some area—the resistance we get is a measure of the interloper's expansive intentions. A dominant victim may fight back; a more submissive victim may relinquish his claim to that particular area and move on to another territory where he can attain some privacy and where his belongings will remain undisturbed.

Summary

The ideas introduced in this chapter to explain the kinds of actions that reflect status differences in this culture form a coherent framework. The metaphor of power and fearlessness underlies the representation of status. Thus, lower-status persons assume postures that indicate weakness; they speak softly and are more tense and watchful in the presence of higher-status others.

Also, in terms of the metaphor, a fearful person does not spontaneously select a position close to one whom he fears and who is more powerful. However, when asked to do so, he obeys and remains watchful. It is therefore not surprising that the prerogative for increasing immediacy remains with the higher-status member in a situation and that when he offers more immediacy to another, it is generally accepted.

In a related way, the phenomenon of territoriality is a by-product of the prerogative of high-status members of a group to dictate their own immediacy with others. Under conditions of crowding, the more powerful members insist on this prerogative and stake out relatively large areas that are out of bounds for the weaker members. Such territories are generally respected under normal conditions of crowding, but need to be forcefully maintained under conditions of overcrowding. Animal studies also show that female or weaker male members of the species who do not threaten the integrity of the territory are gladly welcome to visit and to stay.

Suggested readings

For reviews of the experimental findings on how people convey dominance or status, see Robert Sommer's "Small Group Ecology" [159] and my report "Significance of Posture and Position in the Communication of Attitude and Status Relationships" [111]. Examples of territorial behavior from observations of animals are given by Robert Ardrey [4] and Glen McBride [96]. Edward T. Hall [70] presents a readable account of the differences in the territorial behavior of various cultures .

3

The double-edged message

Since the times of the cavemen, females of *Homo sapiens* have been saying, "No, don't!" Males of the genus, if they were concerned about consent, have been guided more by nonverbal messages of facial expression, tone of voice, and bodily response. If they had heeded only the verbal messages, *H. sapiens* in the late twentieth century would not be troubled by a population explosion. Through the ages down to the present moment, women have often verbally repelled advances from men, while nonverbally encouraging those advances. Thus many women have behaved quite properly in accordance with the customs of their cultures (on the verbal level), while (on the nonverbal level) they signaled contradictory messages.

Most of us have had accidents in social situations—a drink or a cup of coffee spilled, a vase or a lamp overturned. There are many possible reactions to such mishaps from companions and hostesses. But sometimes we've heard from good friends such reactions as "Clumsy!" "Slob!" and "Oh, you schlamiel!" said with a smile and in a tone of exasperated affection. The verbal message, the epithet, expresses the distress and dismay of the speaker; the smile and the voice tone assure us that we have not fallen from favor. It would be difficult, if not impossible for most of us, to put across the complexities of that message in words alone: "I really don't like what you did; it hurts my feelings, but I still like you." Such a verbalization would sound phony at best, and few of us would be inclined to try it. However, some psychotherapists suggest that such messages constitute a healthy way to communicate. Of course, a woman could put the whole complex message in words: "Sweet daddy, get away closer." If she did, he might just get away—the male of the genus can at times be just as perverse as the female.

We are not at our most lovable best when we do it, but most of us on occasion use the two-edged message when we wish to convey heavy sarcasm that can be blandly denied when we are called on it. The formula unfortunately is overused in real life as it is in domestic situation comedies on television. Person A (man or woman) makes a sarcastic statement. Person B protests, takes exception to the remark. Person A replies, usually starting with "But all I said was . . ." and repeats his words in a matter-of-fact tone of voice instead of the original negative one. An exasperated wife tells her husband, "I really like the way we get to go out so often!" He responds with, "Whaddaya mean? We went to the ball game yesterday and the stock car races last weekend!" Then she says, "All I said was that I like the way we get to go out so often," this time saying it with a neutral tone of voice. In television, there is a laugh track; in real life, such exchanges can lead to far more serious consequences. Part of the problem is that in our culture, we are excessively sensitized to words and have very few terms for characterizing nonverbal behavior. It is therefore very difficult, unless we have some audio-video record, to identify and to cope with nonverbal expressions of hostility that are cloaked by simultaneous verbal expressions to which we cannot legitimately take exception.

About a dozen years ago psychologists and psychiatrists working in family therapy became aware of the significance of inconsistent communication [67, 168]; and many of them routinely tape-recorded their therapy sessions. On occasion, they played back recorded segments of previous sessions to their patients to point out the ways in which the family members nonverbally hurt each other, while making seemingly positive or innocuous statements. Such informal inquiries by psychotherapists pointed out that inconsistent communications do indeed serve special functions and motivated researchers to try to understand why people use these messages.

In order to describe these special functions of inconsistent communication, we need first to establish a more general definition of it. Inconsistent communications are those in which contradictory messages are being conveyed simultaneously by words and other behaviors. That is, we may express something verbally while our facial expressions [16], posture [111], tone of voice [73, 150, 161], or gestures [39] say the opposite. Since the kinds of messages that we can communicate nonverbally are liking, dominance, and responsiveness, inconsistency can be measured in terms of each of these three separately.

Watch for two-edged messages—as others talk, as others speak to you, as you speak to others. How often is the verbal message contradicted by voice tone, facial expression, posture, gestures? Are people more prone to use inconsistent messages in some situations than others? Can you spot an expression of liking contradicted? How? Can you find an expression of dominance contradicted by behavior of submissiveness? If you do not observe a situation of contradictory messages about responsiveness, can you remember or imagine such?

The resolution of inconsistent messages

As noted, a person can convey varying degrees of liking by simultaneously using words, facial and vocal expressions, postures, and gestures. He may also convey different degrees of dominance with these behaviors. Many a politician has stood before the voters, chest proudly thrust forward, posture erect, and in a booming voice declared, "If elected, I will be the humble servant of the people." The demeanor of such a candidate, his manner of dress, and the props surrounding him more often than not have indicated a high status and a dominant position. The objective observer could hardly believe that the candidate is capable of being a truly humble servant of the people, or that he has any intention of trying to be. He might, however, think of him as a person in a position of power who will take great care to seem considerate of the needs and feelings of others, particularly his constituents.

Behaviors can be used simultaneously with speech to convey different degrees of responsiveness to another person. The fast-talking auctioneer is a champion of inconsistency here. His voluble and almost incessant speech shows a great deal of responsiveness, but his bland expressions and monotonous voice are at the other extreme—completely unresponsive.

One interesting question now arises: Is there a systematic and coherent approach to resolving the general meaning or impact of an inconsistent message? Indeed there is. Our experimental results [125, 133] show:

$$\text{Total liking} = 7\%\ \text{verbal liking} + 38\%\ \text{vocal liking} + 55\%\ \text{facial liking}$$

Thus the impact of facial expression is greatest, then the impact of the tone of voice (or vocal expression), and finally that of words. If the facial expression is inconsistent with the words, ✓ the degree of liking conveyed by the facial expression will dominate and determine the impact of the total message. On the other hand, in an audiorecorded message or a conversation on the phone, if the vocal expression happens to contradict the words, then the former determines the total impact. This can work either way: The words may be positive and the vocal expression negative, in which case the total sarcastic message is a negative one; or the vocal expression may be positive and the words negative, in which case the total message is a positive one.

Professor Michael Argyle and his colleagues [6] confirmed our findings reported in the above equation. In a related study, they also found support for a similar relationship when the messages referred to dominance [9]; a person's nonverbal behavior far outweighs the importance of his words when he uses contradictory messages showing dominance-submissiveness. For instance, if a person's facial expression and posture are domineering, no matter how submissive his words imply him to be, the message will be interpreted in a manner consistent with the dominance revealed by his facial expression and posture.

There are as yet no experimental results for analysis of inconsistent messages of responsiveness; but those results, once obtained, probably will conform to what has been found for liking and dominance.

In an employment interview, the applicant may say all the right things, but his contradictory behavior may cost him the job. He may say positively that he is interested in the job, that he will work hard and believes very much in what the company is doing. But the interviewer may find that his bland and expressionless face and voice do little to confirm this verbalized enthusiasm, and may intuitively decide that he does not really mean what he says. As most of us do, in trying to estimate how enthusiastic an applicant really is about getting a particular job, an interviewer tends to give more weight to his nonverbal than to his verbal responsiveness.

Generalizing, we can say that a person's nonverbal behavior has more bearing than his words on communicating feelings or attitudes to others. So we have rewritten our equation for any *feeling* instead of just *liking*.

$$\text{Total feeling} = 7\%\ \text{verbal feeling} + 38\%\ \text{vocal feeling} + 55\%\ \text{facial feeling}$$

Numerical values in this equation are only approximate. However, the order of importance of words, vocal expressions, and facial expressions is likely to be upheld in future experiments. To use this equation, we have to restrict ourselves to the analysis of only one dimension of feeling at a time. This dimension could be like-dislike, dominance-submissiveness, or responsiveness; or it could be even very specific feelings such as joy, anxiety, hurt, depression, or curiosity.

To estimate the total feeling communicated, it is first necessary to measure the impact of each behavior by itself and on the same scale. The equation is then used to compute the total impact. In the laboratory situation, we obtain videotapes of subjects delivering verbal messages, then have several people separately evaluate the various aspects of communication in terms of the impression made on the receiver of the message, using a scale from −3 to +3. The procedure is of course artificial and could not readily be used outside the laboratory, but it gives us more objective data than those based on unstructured intuition. For example, in estimating the feeling of happiness communicated by a subject, we play back the videotaped message without the sound; a group of judges observes 1) the soundless picture and rates his facial expression on a scale from −3 (extremely unhappy) to +3 (extremely happy). Next, 2) a typed transcription of the message (just the words on paper—no sound, no picture) is rated on the same scale. Finally, the audiorecording is played back through an electronic device (for example, a Krohn-Hite Model 3500 Band Pass Filter) to make 3) the words of the speech incomprehensible while retaining the quality of vocal expression; and this filtered audio message is rated on the same happiness scale.

Let us say that for this example we had a score of −2 for the facial expression, a score of +2 for the words, and a score of −2 for the vocal expression. Inserting these values into the equation gives an overall value for the feeling of happiness communicated by the subject of −1.72 on the scale. In this case, since the vocal expression and facial expression were both judged as unhappy (−2), the impact of the total message is very close to the impact made by these two, and the relative happiness (+2) of the words has very little effect.

We have written the second and more general equation only for combinations of words, vocal expressions, and facial expressions. If we extrapolate from these results, we can obtain the following, reasonably safe, generalization: When any nonverbal behavior contradicts speech, it is more likely to determine the total impact of the message. In other words, touching, positions * (distance, forward lean, or eye contact), postures, gestures, as ✗ well as facial and vocal expressions, can all outweigh words and determine the feelings conveyed by a message.

Suppose an engaged couple encounters a woman whom the man had formerly dated frequently. She has news of a mutual friend, who is unknown to the fiancée. As they pause for the exchange of pleasantries, he reaches out and grasps the hand of his fiancée. Even though he has turned his face and his direct attention from her, the clasping of her hand is reassurance that she is more important to him than the other woman and is preferred to her. One implication here is that touching is a very important clue to liking; and, even when it contradicts postures, positions, and words, it still determines the total impact of a message.

We have all experienced interruptions of social and business conversations by phone calls. On some occasions and for any of a number of reasons, the interruption may be protracted. As the host continues his phone conversation, however, he turns in the direction of his visitor, makes eye contact, smiles, or uses other facial expressions that indicate his regret about the interruption. The silent messages assure the visitor that the host has not forgotten him and is not neglecting him even though he is talking to someone else. Here again, the importance of facial expressions becomes evident, since generally they are quite sufficient to keep the visitor from feeling restless and uneasy as he occupies his enforced social vacuum.

The basic metaphors that underlie silent messages, together with some other aspects of our culture, help us to understand why people assign greater weight to the nonverbal part of inconsistently communicated feelings [9, 125]. Two pervasive traditions of Western society bear on this issue. The first and probably more important of these traditions is restraint in the expression of feelings, particularly negative ones, outside the sphere of intimate relationships [146]. The second is the absence of explicit instruction on the subject of nonverbal communication within the framework of formal education. The continued emphasis on language skills both at home and in school is a sharp contrast to the neglect of training in nonverbal communication.

How do these two traditions relate to one another in affecting communication? It is assumed that the human organism cannot totally "conceal" emotion—that emotions denied expression in one channel find another outlet [41, 119]. Both negative feelings (frustration, irritation, anger, hostility) and positive feelings (pleasure, liking, love) are part of social life, so if expression is discouraged, feelings are conveyed less overtly (and often without conscious volition) by nonverbal behaviors. These are more subtle; nonetheless, they assume a greater significance for many who rely more on these less-censored expressions. The deemphasis of nonverbal communication in education helps to perpetuate a situation in which socially unacceptable feelings must be expressed in behaviors other than speech and cannot be recognized "officially" as part of a person's communication. We learn to express a variety of feelings in these more subtle ways to avoid detectable transgression of the social norms.

The function of inconsistent messages

We sometimes say, "That's great!" with a sarcastic tone of voice when we could simply say, "That's lousy!" Sometimes a wife exclaims to her husband, "I hate you!" with a positive expression when she could use a consistent message to express liking. Even though both the inconsistent and consistent messages convey liking to the husband, in some situations she finds the inconsistent one more expressive of her intended meaning. There must be some special function that is served by such inconsistent messages and that cannot operate with consistent ones. This function becomes apparent when we think of the wife who says, "I hate you!" with a loving expression. In this instance, there may be a certain degree of resignation in her message. She might use this particular form when he has done something that will cause her extra work or inconvenience and yet in no way affects her love for him. For example, he might have come home with an adorable puppy, for which the children have been clamoring for months and which she also has wanted—covertly. Although her words convey her dismay over the prospect of housebreaking, muddy paw prints, and desecrated flowerbeds, her soft laugh and the warmth of her voice tell him that he has in no way forfeited her love and approval [117]. As we have already seen, despite the negativeness of the words, the total impact is a positive one.

On the other hand, an inconsistent message can have a negative impact. Darlene, a secretary, in talking about the office manager, may say to a coworker, "Oh yes! I really like him!" with a sarcastic tone of voice. The message received by Harriet is that Darlene dislikes their supervisor; this inference is consistent with the vocal expression that Darlene used in expressing the words. The words may be simply a playful continuation of an earlier segment of the conversation—something like, "What's the matter, don't you like him?" from Harriet. Chances are that the office manager is someone who cannot be openly and directly criticized by underlings. In this informal conversation between Darlene and Harriet, the words playfully maintain a façade that has to be put up in his presence, but they are clearly contradicted by actions and tone of voice.

These examples bring out another aspect of inconsistent messages—they are more likely to be used in an informal and casual setting than in a formal one [117]. A situation is informal when we are with friends rather than acquaintances or people we barely know, or when we are with people of whom we can be openly critical as we cannot be with others who tend to be readily hurt and are intolerant of criticism. Private, face-to-face conversations are generally more informal than those conducted where strangers are nearby and where arguments could be embarrassing. In other words, when the situation or the person you converse with is "uptight," inconsistent messages of any kind are discouraged. In such circumstances, the humor of an unpleasant comment spoken jokingly will not be appreciated, and consistent negative messages of any kind can only "put people off."

In welcoming a new employee to his job, the department head says, "We are all equal here and can openly express our feelings. I want you to let your feelings be known and especially to let me know if you have reservations about anything or feel that something is wrong." As he speaks, his posture, facial expression, and vocal expression convey his awareness of his dominant relationship relative to the new member of his department, who comes away from this pep talk with the feeling that the boss is a bit of a phony, trying to be a nice guy, but doesn't really mean it. In other words, the new man feels that he will be wise not to be critical of anything the boss says or does.

We have already discussed how self-conscious Americans feel about the issue of status. Some aspects of the hippie and youth culture notwithstanding, it is still legitimate in many parts of this culture to actively seek status—but not to talk about it or to flaunt it. In our socially prescribed dealings with others, good manners include much behavior that is deferential, considerate of the needs, wishes, and egos of others. Very few who use these social mannerisms, which might appear to the uninitiated as evidence of humility and submissiveness, are at all humble or submissive. The American who flaunts his power or his higher status in one context or another does not get along well with other Americans. As with expressions of dislike, verbal or blatant nonverbal communication of a dominant attitude is discouraged. The social bully is offensive and wins no popularity contests.

When a policeman says, "Pull over!" most of us have an inclination to retort, "Say 'Please'." An imperious demand, a direct order, or a command generally sparks in most of us a disinclination to comply. A folk saying has it: "Honey attracts more flies than vinegar." The reaction is not peculiar to twentieth-century Americans; Aesop's fable about the relative persuasiveness of the North Wind and the Sun has been known for at least 2500 years. We are not taught to grovel, to kowtow, or to be servile. However, we are taught to say "Excuse me," "Please," and "Thank you." As status goes in our culture, many (though not all) children of highest status strata are most carefully trained in these and other social amenities. Our peers of childhood teach us more surely than our families about relative effectiveness of requests and demands; the child who tries to boss others around is not acceptable to his peer group.

We do not use words and behaviors of dominance, if for no other reason than that they are not generally effective in getting us what we want and need from others. If the verbal message and the nonverbal behaviors that accompany it convey an impression of dominance, most of us almost instinctively balk and cooperate no more than we absolutely must. We have to make demands on others; others constantly make demands on us. We ask favors of others; others ask favors of us. Often, however, orders and demands are phrased as requests or as quasi-requests. If they are starkly phrased ("Do this . . . ," "Give me that . . ."), they are often communicated as requests because of the quality of facial expression and tone of voice.

Sometimes the social roles make it clear that these covert expressions of request are clearly a sign of polite consideration: An executive says pleasantly to his secretary, "Miss Carlson, would you please bring me the file on the construction contract?" The verbal message and the nonverbal behaviors convey nothing of dominance. But that is an order—he knows it and she knows it. There is no question in his mind or hers about the dominant and submissive roles in the situation.

Generally, we are well aware of status and of the relative power of others to affect our lives for good or ill; and we do tend to modify our behaviors accordingly. The submissive aspects of our nonverbal behavior associated with requests tend to be intensified, however slightly, when we deal with a person who has the power to injure us (as through loss of employment or of social favor). The submissive overtones are often less evident when the other person is in a dependent or subordinate position, such as a child. Nevertheless, there are some people who even in dealing with a dependent other use excessively pleading expressions as they make a request. It is tempting to say that such a person is just trying to be considerate. A more accurate description, however, is that this is a submissive person who has an unrealistic concern about possible rebuff and rejection, even when his social position legitimately allows him to make a request.

Our discussion and examples show that inconsistent messages come into play in this culture when we have mixed feelings about something [117]. Implicit and explicit social rules sometimes dictate certain ways of acting that are strongly at odds with our true feelings in some situations. At these times, we often send inconsistent messages in which we quite literally pay lip service (verbal message) to social convention, while nonverbal messages betray our real feelings. Experimental findings confirm folk wisdom: "Actions speak louder than words." Generally speaking, others weigh our actions more than our words as they try to understand what we feel.

Inconsistent messages and social influence

Inconsistent messages also assume a very special function in situations in which people influence one another [115]. Even though we don't like to talk about it, our dealings with others frequently involve influencing them or being influenced by them. Our behavior is influenced more than most of us care to admit even to ourselves by our friends and our foes, by our coworkers as well as our superiors in our employment situation, by our neighbors (even if we don't know them), by "people" (as in ". . . but what will people think!").

We accept persuasion as a legitimate, if sometimes annoying, part of living—sometimes we enjoy being coaxed. Efforts to persuade others are essential in human interaction; some of us are more skillful than others. However, we tend to be outraged by efforts to influence that go beyond persuasion, which is acceptable, and become manipulation, which is repugnant. There is a subtle difference between "He persuaded me" and "He conned me into it." We speak of "credibility gaps" and "manipulation of news," and our disapproval probably reflects our resentment of manipulation—not of news but of us.

We don't like to think about or discuss what might be considered "undue and improper" influence. Manipulation of others is a socially disapproved activity, and we prefer to believe that we would not do it (or at least not be caught doing it). Most of us are sufficient egoists to be foolishly certain that we cannot be manipulated by others. As with other aspects of social interaction, unwillingness or inability to verbalize about something, to discuss it, makes nonverbal behavior related to it a more important vehicle of communication. In other words, when the words fail to convey some important fact in a social situation, actions take over this function.

A psychotherapist's relationship with his adult patients is an instructive example for us to consider. Now, the therapist, if he is to be worth what he charges for his time, is going to influence his patient's behavior, but he must do so without being too obvious about it. At least this is the feeling of most of the more traditional and psychoanalytically oriented therapists [56, 147].

Such a therapist makes sure his patients know that he will not provide any suggestions or guidelines. He says very little, and that little is mostly restricted to carefully neutral questions like "How?" and "Why you?" and "Then what did you do?" If the patient chooses not to talk, he can sit in patient silence for the k whole of a 50-minute hour. If he carries the logic of his professional rationale to an extreme, he will be just as guarded in what he reveals nonverbally by voice tone, facial expression, posture, and gestures. However, generally his nonverbal behavior does reveal some differential preference for certain things that his patient does or reports. Even when in traditional Freudian style [56], a therapist sits at the head of the couch and behind his reclining patient so that the patient cannot see him at all, he can still show varying degrees of interest and preference in his vocal expressions. In most therapy sessions, however, therapists are actually fully visible to their patients and can subtly and nonverbally reveal information about their preference for or dislike of different things reported by the patient. Since, as we have already seen, the impact of nonverbal behavior outweighs the impact of words, it follows that the therapist is in a position to !! guide, nonverbally, his patient's progress without actually requesting him to do anything specific [164].

The function of the psychoanalytically oriented therapist is to help the patient to help himself. He does not tell the patient what is wrong with him and what he should do about it because, according to the theoretical orientation, it is futile to do so anyway until the patient works it out himself and premature disclosure may harm the patient rather than help him. Also, the nonintervention, nondirective approach protects the therapist from loss of face and against rebellion or antagonism from his patient. Since he does not make suggestions or demands, the patient cannot shift the responsibility for his social problems to his therapist, nor can he set about to prove the therapist wrong, thus delaying his own progress.

As in the case of the therapist who denies being directive in relation to his patient, in some situations, talk about "self-determination" of a group is suspect, especially when the speaker has a stake in the outcome of self-determination. The one who stresses self-determination may be a Den Mother of a Cub Scout Pack, a union leader, a grade-school teacher, or a boss of a political machine—he knows full well that any open and aggressive efforts on his part or on the part of his organization, simply to dictate the actions of the group in question, may well fail or even backfire. Thus he talks about self-determination while unobtrusively, perhaps even ruthlessly, manipulating the group in the desired direction.

Inconsistent messages and psychological disturbance

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Attention was first drawn to the significance of inconsistent messages in the context of work with schizophrenics [67, 168]. Psychotherapists who interviewed schizophrenic patients along with their families began to notice a certain peculiarity in the way in which parents addressed their maladjusted children. There seemed to be a predominance of inconsistent messages; many of the parents, for example, repeatedly said reasonably pleasant things about their children while nonverbally conveying negative feelings. This kind of message was interpreted by therapists as being confusing and probably the major source of psychological disturbance. For instance, when a mother tells her son, "Come and give your mommy a kiss" and then turns away from him as he approaches because his hands are dirty, the child is confused. He thinks that he's wanted, and yet he is also rejected. He does not know what to do. He loses either way. If he reacts to the nonverbal behavior—the turning away—by crying and shrinking back, his mother will be offended because she has told him to come over and kiss her. On the other hand, if he reacts to what she said and tries to come to her and kiss her, she will be offended by his dirty hands and reject him.

This double-bind situation, repeated over and over again, gives the child no clear choice for action and leads him to a point where he himself begins to use very peculiar inconsistent messages. For example, a son sends a birthday card to his mother and signs it "Napoleon." This action lets his mother know on the one hand that he has remembered her birthday and is being affectionate, but signing a name not his own implies that it was not really he who sent the card. This bizarre behavior is consistent with his other strange and maladaptive ways of dealing with people.

Double-bind theorists' basic assumption about the relation between psychological disturbance and inconsistent messages was that the latter are ambiguous and difficult to interpret [67, 155, 168]. However, we now know that this is not true. People do quite readily understand the true meaning when the verbal and nonverbal parts of a message are inconsistent—they rely on the nonverbal part and make their judgment accordingly [6, 9, 125, 133].

We now also know that parents of maladjusted children do not necessarily use more frequent inconsistent messages than do parents of normal children, but they do use more negative messages [13]. Analysis of the anecdotal evidence cited by the double-bind therapists in support of their thesis shows that they were struck by the inconsistent sarcastic messages and not by the inconsistent positive ones. In other words, the messages that drew their attention had an overall negative impact. Present experimental findings show that indeed parents of the more maladjusted children do communicate more negative feelings to these children and that they sometimes use sarcastic messages to do so [13].

There are two ways to understand the latter result. First, the parents' initial negative attitude toward their own children may be the cause of maladjustment in their children; second, they may be more negative toward their disturbed children since these are a greater source of frustration to them. It is also possible that both of these processes are involved and together function to perpetuate an unhealthy parent-child relationship. A vicious cycle is maintained whereby the child is constantly criticized and feels his parents do not like him, so he does not cooperate or meet their demands. As the child is disobedient and rebellious in relation to his parents, the parents become even more frustrated and have more reasons for being negative to him, he in turn becomes even less cooperative, and so forth; the difficulty is easily perpetuated [115].

We must be cautious in identifying inconsistent messages with psychological disturbance. With our implicit social rules and prohibitions about the expressions of feelings (particularly negative ones), people frequently must use inconsistent messages. They may also use these to achieve efficient communication or even to be funny. Our discussion suggests that we should focus, not on the inconsistency as such, but rather on the total impact of a message. Is the overall quality positive or negative? Unusually frequent negative messages are indicative of frustrated and frustrating relationships, whether these be of married couples or of parents and their children.

The vicious cycle of a negative relationship can be easily modified. With outside help, the parent can gain some feeling of adequacy and control over the relationship with the child. This minimizes his sense of frustration and allows him to be more positive. At this more positive stage of the relationship, the child, in turn, may become more amenable to influence and more willing to make some effort; social influence is enhanced by liking and positive feelings in a relationship and is discouraged by negative feelings [114, 127]. The response of the child provides the parent with an even greater sense of accomplishment and control and reduces his frustration further. So, he is even more positive, and so forth. The vicious cycle is broken and a positive cycle thereby initiated [115].

Summary

One of the more common examples of contradictory verbal and nonverbal behavior is sarcasm. "How wonderful!" said with a negative tone of voice is interpreted as "How bad!" because the vocal expression is more important than the words. The same phrase, "How wonderful!" said with a negative vocal expression *and* a disgruntled frown implies even a stronger negative feeling and is more likely to imply "How utterly miserable!" The negative message in the vocal expression as well as the facial expression accounts for this stronger result [125].

The opposite of sarcasm, for which we don't have a word in English, is involved when we, for instance, tell a friend, "You idiot!" with a smile and positive tone of voice. The overall result is more of a joke than an insult. "You little monster!" said to a child with a smile implies "You lovable little creature!"

The general rule for understanding the effects of such inconsistent messages is that, when actions contradict words, people rely more heavily on actions to infer another's feelings [5, 125, 133]. In other words, it appears that less-controllable behaviors are assigned greater weight. for neg. words; + NV also ?

Of course, if both our words and facial expressions show pleasure, a different effect is produced than if only the words show pleasure. It has been demonstrated that redundancy of messages in different behaviors intensifies the impact [125]. In a number of African languages, this rule is exemplified at work as a formal grammatical device [169]. An adjective is repeated successively to emphasize a certain quality of an object or person. Applying this to English, we would say, "He was a happy, happy man," to stress great happiness. The effect of redundancy explains why someone is more convincing when he uses an expressive face and voice to say, "No, that doesn't bother me at all," than when he says it with bland vocal and facial expressions.

Our silent messages may contradict or reinforce what we say in words; in either event, they are more potent in communication than the words we speak.

Suggested readings

For specific experimental reports of how inconsistent messages are resolved, see works of Michael Argyle and various coworkers [6; 9; pp. 140–143 of 5], and related work done in our laboratory [125, 133]. Experimental results of preferences for consistent and inconsistent messages are given in my report "When Are Feelings Communicated Inconsistently?" [117]. Articles by Nancy Beakel and myself [13] and by Anthony Schuham [155] contain data and reviews of studies that related inconsistent messages to psychopathology.

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What is social style?

We form distinct first impressions of many people whom we meet; we feel that they are extroverted, introverted, domineering, obnoxious, self-assured, argumentative and hostile, or even bland. There is something about each person, a pervasive style that applies to almost everything he does and that enables us to form an impression before any exchange of words [1].

Observe your own reactions as you meet people for the first time. You may find yourself forming certain ideas of what you can expect from each person or how much you feel you might like him. Of one, you may think to yourself, "Here's a timid and passive type"; of another, "There's an intolerable snob!"

The way an extrovert enters a gathering is very different from the entrance made by an introvert. A domineering person takes his seat in a more central and visible position than the place selected by a submissive and passive type [159]. The gestures and movements of these different persons somehow suggest the character or style of their personalities without the aid of words. In addition to a person's nonverbal behavior, the physical props that he uses, as in his home or work environment, and his manner of dress provide the necessary background for a more complete impression [70].

What specifically is it about the nonverbal behavior or favorite props of different persons that creates such distinct impressions? How, for instance, does a domineering person convey this image even before he speaks? As you assume a seat next to a stranger on a plane trip, what is it about him that leads you to think, "This looks like it's going to be an interesting trip" instead of "I wish they had given me another seat"?

Of course, the way in which a person is dressed and his general physical appearance have a certain effect on the impression he makes. However, here we are more interested in the behaviors that supplement, or even override, this appearance in presenting an overall picture. For instance, aside from her dress and make-up, what is it in a coquette's mannerisms that label her a flirt? Is it the greater intimacy she conveys to men? Does she indulge in more eye contact with strangers? Does she stand unduly close to men who are only casual acquaintances? Or is it because her behavior fluctuates in positiveness, warm and intimate at times and aloof and coy at others?

So far, the importance of people's actions has been highlighted by considering the impression they make before they speak. One can also form an impression of someone whom he has not seen, but whose speech or writings are familiar. Actually meeting someone with whom we have corresponded but have never met before can have a jarring effect. A favorite author, eloquent and fluent on paper, may turn out to be a shy fellow who stutters and stammers; he may be a young man, although we had imagined him as an old and serious fellow. The impression that has been drawn from the nonimmediate communications involving words (that is, his writings only) simply does not fit with our observations in a face-to-face contact.

Newscasters and announcers who can employ vocal expressions as well as words on radio still provide us with only a very sketchy impression of what they are like. An announcer's voice might give us the impression of a tall and domineering person, but he may actually be small and quite friendly and unimposing. A person with a "flat" voice may turn out to be very interesting.

More interesting still is how a person's home or office may contribute largely to the overall impression formed. In fact, some of us feel that we do not really know a person until we have visited him on his home ground. We may find that a man who is apparently interested in nothing but sports cars has a good library and a classical record collection at home. A television star who plays tough killer-type roles may be revealed by a feature story in a fan magazine as a father who spends most of his free time with his young children and their pets.

There are several interrelated questions that need to be answered in order to formulate what factors go into making an overall picture of a person. Probably, it is not just one isolated behavior here or there that gives us an impression but rather a composite of behaviors that are indicative of a certain style. One question therefore is "What are these clusters?" or ① "What are the categories of social behavior?" A second question is ② "What are the personality attributes [74], qualities such as extroversion or introversion, that underlie distinct social styles?" Finally, ③ "How are the various personality attributes related to the categories of social behavior?"

The elements of social behavior

To answer such questions, we devised situations similar to the following one in several experiments [120, 122, 123, 129]. Pairs of students, who acted as subjects in our experiments and who were perfect strangers to each other, were led into a room by an experimenter. She told them that they were going to listen to some music and that she had to prepare the tape. For five minutes, while they waited for the experimenter to return with the tape, each pair was observed from an adjacent room through a one-way mirror. The subjects were unaware of being observed, and what transpired was a natural exchange between pairs of strangers. Everything they said and did during the five-minute period was recorded on videotape.

At the end of this waiting, they did actually listen to some music and were asked to judge its pleasantness. They then answered some questions covering personality measures, which included such statements as "I like to know people who have a lot of friends" and "When someone does something to hurt my feelings, it takes me a long time to get over it."

These measures were available to us from other experiments and had been devised to describe various aspects of personality. One of these, a measure of affiliative tendency [116], can be used to assign a score to each person showing how friendly or unfriendly he is. A second one measures the sensitivity of a person to rejection [116]; that is, how much he fears being slighted in a social setting and how hard he tries to avoid this possibility. Other personality questionnaires can be used to measure a person's disposition to succeed at achievement tasks [109, 110], his dependency, impulsivity, aggressiveness, or desire for social recognition [74].

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Once they had completed the questionnaires, the subjects were given a thorough briefing on the experiment. Their questionnaire answers provided us with a description of their personalities, while their behavior in the waiting situation provided us with data that could be scored [112] and used to formulate the categories of social behavior. With these data, we were in a position to try to define clusters of social behavior and, more importantly, to relate these clusters to personality attributes.

In observing the pairs of subjects through the one-way mirror, it was readily apparent that there were striking differences among them. One of the most fascinating aspects of psychological research is the opportunity to observe the differences in the behavior of people in the same experimental situation. This can be interesting and instructive even for the casual onlooker.

As you have opportunity, take a few minutes to observe different behaviors of people in standardized situations; for example, as they approach a cashier's booth to buy tickets to a performance that is sold out, or as they respond to the stewardess on boarding or leaving a plane.

Tellers, cashiers, and waitresses have the opportunity to see differences in how people act in similar situations. For instance, one man at a snack-bar counter asks courteously, "May I please have a hot dog?" Another says, "Give me a hot dog," in a matter-of-fact tone. A third and friendly man says, "Let's have a hot dog." A fourth belligerently demands, "Give me a hot dog, will you?" The short-order cook who serves them gets a real education in psychology, provided these brief exchanges are typical of each stranger's personality. His experience with many people in this situation allows him to assess each instance as being unusual or normal. Although he may be unable to conclude much about the person who acts like most others, he can certainly make educated assumptions about the personality of one who belligerently demands a hot dog from a perfect stranger [108].

In the case of the experiment being described, one objective was to see whether it is indeed possible to make such generalizations. Is it possible to observe someone for five minutes and predict accurately what kind of person he is, that is, predict his scores on a personality questionnaire?

To do so, we first analyzed the videorecordings and scored each person's behavior on some three dozen measures, including how frequently he smiled and gestured, how positive his speech was, how relaxed he appeared, and how close he stood to his partner [120, 129]. In doing this scoring, we tried to include as many different aspects of behavior as we thought were a meaningful part of social interaction [112]. Given these scores, it was possible to determine which sets of the behaviors clustered together to define a category of social behavior.

The most important cluster that we identified was *affiliative behavior*. This included the frequency of declarative statements (which served as a measure of how much a person spoke), percentage of the waiting time that was spent looking in the direction of the partner, the frequency of head nods and hand gestures, and the pleasant versus unpleasant quality of what was said. As is characteristic of a cluster, these behaviors were found to change together. That is, when someone had more of one of these behaviors, he also exhibited more of the rest. Alternatively, a person who talked very little also had very few of the other qualities in his behavior.

(1) All the behaviors on this list show liking and preference. If we dislike someone or wish to make a negative impression, we intuitively tend to avoid all the behaviors in this cluster. These findings together with others lead us to conclude that affiliation is inseparable from the communication of liking. People affiliate more with liked than disliked persons; and if we affiliate a lot

with someone, he can reasonably infer that we like him. In sum, this first category of social interaction, gregarious behavior, is generally perpetuated through the exchange of positive feelings and cannot be maintained or is lacking in the absence of such an exchange [127].

Since one major category of social behavior is closely intertwined with a primary feeling dimension, like-dislike, we wonder if there are other categories of social behavior corresponding to the remaining feeling dimensions, dominance-submissiveness and responsiveness [113]. Indeed, we identified two additional clusters that paralleled these two qualities.

The cluster of behaviors that defined *responsiveness* consisted of the total expressive quality of the tone of voice, including positive and negative vocal expressions, speech volume, and speech rate measured in number of words per minute. Facial activity, which includes positive as well as negative facial expressions, has also been identified as part of this cluster in some of our experiments [134]. Thus, one aspect of our social behavior is how responsive we seem to others, and these are the specific cues that reflect it.

We have found, for instance, that when a person tries to persuade someone else of something, there is a sharp increase in his responsiveness relative to when he is just trying to be informative [134]. Such findings show that even though responsiveness can be part of an individual's general style, it can also increase or decrease depending on the circumstances in which he interacts with others. Nevertheless, if we say that someone is responsive, we mean that averaging across a variety of situations, we find him to be relatively more so than others.

The third cluster of behaviors related to the *dominant-submissive dimension* and included all the relaxation cues [120]: reclining or sideways lean while seated and an asymmetrical placement of the arms and legs. Greater relaxation, as we have already seen, is associated with a higher status and a more dominant feeling. In contrast, tension, which is indexed by a symmetrical placement of the arms and legs and an upright posture, is more characteristic of the social behavior of those who are lower in status and who are more subordinate [111].

There were several other clusters, one of which represented *distress.* In one experiment in which the subjects were standing, greater distress was indexed by the percentage of the waiting period during which the subject walked about or preoccupied himself with various objects in the room; writing on a blackboard, examining the thermostat, or looking behind things [129].

One of the remaining clusters, *ingratiating behavior,* deserves more discussion. This cluster included frequent questioning, smiling and other pleasant vocal and facial expressions, frequent verbal agreements such "Uh-huh," "Yes," or "Same here," and the complete exclusion of negative and unpleasant remarks [129].

Due to its positive quality, ingratiation can be, and has been found to be, a relative of affiliation. However, there is a distinctive quality about ingratiating behavior and the feeling which it projects that keeps it apart from affiliation.

I once spent an evening with a friend and her date whom I met for the first time that night. Throughout the evening, he asked me an unusually large number of questions, which quickly became a considerable burden, and which I was unable to discourage. He was not unpleasant but seemed rather interested, smiled a lot, and had a very positive tone of voice; however, he gave me the impression of being dependent and clinging. His frequent questions and related mannerisms exemplified an almost pure case of ingratiating style. More common instances of ingratiation are likely to be considerably toned down. People sometimes behave in an ingratiating way at the beginning of a somewhat formal or awkward social situation but change to a more relaxed and casual manner with increasing familiarity.

In sum, ingratiating behaviors, despite their positive quality, are conducive to a strained and uncomfortable interaction. The positiveness is excessive and demands reciprocation. The ingratiator is judged as somewhat false and insincere, and his victim feels forced to smile and be pleasant. The frequent questioning and the nonverbal behaviors, which are part of the ingratiator's attempt to insure a positive reaction, hint at his dependency. Table 1 accordingly shows that ingratiating behavior is a combination of positiveness and submissiveness.

Table 1
Qualities of social behavior and corresponding qualities of personality

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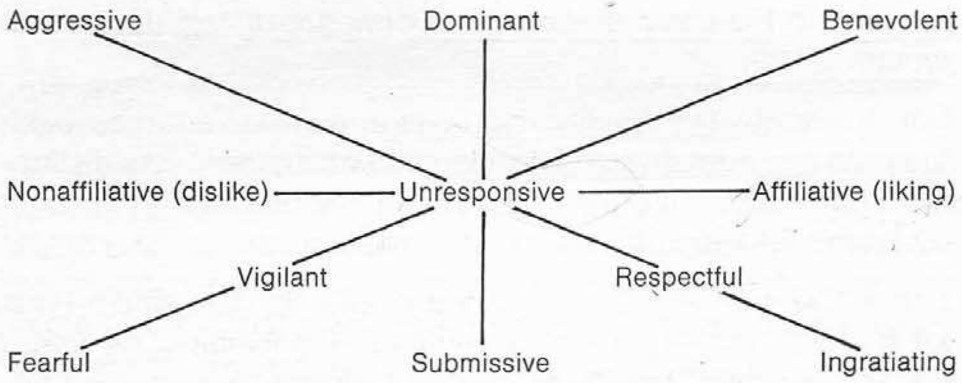
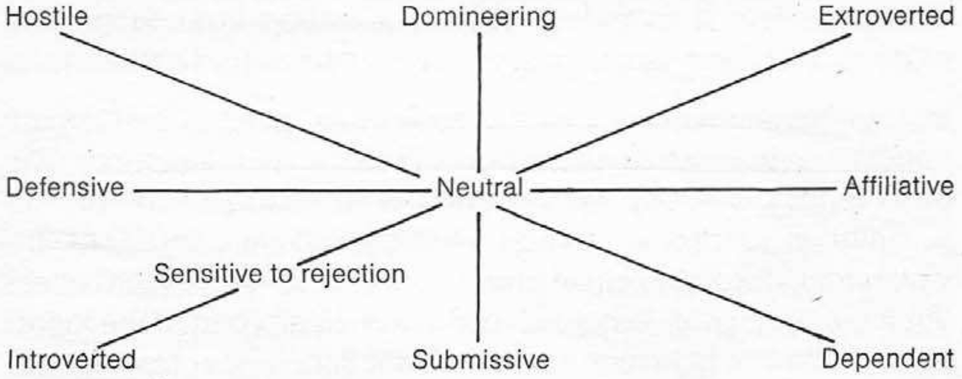
Behaviors and associated feelings


Aggressive
Dominant
Benevolent
Nonaffiliative (dislike)
Unresponsive
Affiliative (liking)
Vigilant
Respectful
Fearful
Submissive
Ingratiating

Personality types


Hostile
Domineering
Extroverted
Defensive
Neutral
Affiliative
Sensitive to rejection
Introverted
Submissive
Dependent

This table also shows that somewhere between ingratiation and affiliation there is the category of *respectful behavior*. The best way to describe the latter is that, although it includes a submissive quality, it lacks the undesirable aspects of ingratiation. Respectful behavior, which is more reserved, is characteristic of interactions with a higher-status person who is liked, such as a liked employer.

The top half of Table 1 lists various combinations of affiliative and dominant-submissive behaviors. The words that characterize these also strongly imply certain feelings. For instance, a combination of dominance and dislike yields aggressive behavior, which in turn implies the anger that underlies it. A very different quality, benevolence, is obtained by combining high degrees of liking and dominance. This again is a way of describing a behavior and its concomitant feeling or attitude.

Vigilance lies somewhere between unresponsive and fearful behavior. In a vigilant state, a person is slightly tense and slightly negative [105], but he acts in this way because of apprehension about possible rejection or because of a lack of self-confidence.

The elements of social style

One of the main questions we asked ourselves in doing this study was how to describe the social styles of different personality types. The obtained relations between the personality scores and the behaviors of the various subjects provided some of this information. For example, those who had received high scores on the measure of affiliative tendency behaved in a friendly and affiliative way in the waiting situation [120, 129]. The second half of Table 1 extends our findings to provide a more complete, but somewhat speculative, description.

For every kind of behavior in the top section of Table 1, there is a corresponding personality type listed in the bottom section. For instance, Carl Jung [79] introduced the concepts of introversion and extroversion to distinguish important aspects of social style. Extroverts are more outgoing, friendly, and approachable, and they are more likely to take charge of social situations; whereas introverts are passive, shy, and withdrawn [49]. Accordingly, Table 1 shows that an extrovert's characteristic behaviors are both dominant and positive, whereas an introvert's typical behaviors exclude affiliation and are submissive. Thus, the extrovert, unlike the introvert, is likely to make a good leader. He not only shows self-assurance in this position but can also generate and maintain good feelings in the group.

The style of an affiliative person characteristically conveys liking to others and also elicits it [123]. It is therefore conducive to the perpetuation of good feelings and comfortable social relationships. At the other extreme, a defensive person generally relates to others in a negative way. He either expects to be hurt or is in the process of retaliating against imaginary aggression. Further, his negative behaviors provide some of the stimulus to uphold his negative expectations; people who come into contact with him do not enjoy his company and might occasionally express irritation and anger toward him.

One personality type that we have identified is characteristically negative and tense in his social behavior but only moderately so. This type is referred to as "sensitive to rejection" in Table 1. The tension of such people results from their concern about not being liked or being slighted by others. Unfortunately, the way in which they behave is of little help and aggravates their concerns. They fail to convey liking to strangers and are therefore less likely to elicit liking and affiliation. In other words, their discouraging manner does indeed occasionally contribute to their rejection and renews their fears [123, 129].

When we meet strangers who are sensitive to rejection, we find that they tend to say very little, appear uncomfortable, and not infrequently make us feel somewhat uncomfortable. Their behavior prevents us from finding a topic of mutual interest that can be the beginning of a pleasant conversation. We also sometimes meet affiliative strangers who even from the first moment put us at ease and prove themselves pleasant and likable companions.

The pure dominant or submissive types of Table 1 are not as interesting as some of the kinds of people we have already considered. A dominant person has a controlling and relaxed style that is neither positive nor negative in the effect it has on others. The submissive person, who also fails to leave a clear positive or negative impression, is simply passive, tense, and a follower.

Some of the most consistent results in our research on social styles bear on sex differences. Women are generally more positive and less dominant than men. Specifically, their nonverbal style communicates more liking [77, 120], and they are less relaxed and more submissive in their nonverbal behavior [111, 120]. Consistent with these results are the findings that they get higher scores on measures of affiliative tendency [3] and empathy [124].

Just for fun, make a list of your ten best-liked friends and relatives. Categorize their styles and personalities using the concepts of Table 1. Is there any consistent pattern in the kinds of people you like? If there seems to be a certain type of person you are drawn to, how does this type compare with your own style and personality?

Problem styles

An educator once told me that teachers who habitually gesture more get better results with their students. This puzzling observation can be explained in terms of what we already know. An affiliative style, which elicits liking and cooperation from others, includes frequent gesturing along with other behaviors that also convey positive feelings [120]. The gesturing of these more effective teachers is probably only one aspect of a generally positive style that leads students to like them and thus to become more cooperative and involved in their class work [114]. Of course, the opposite is more likely to be the case for those teachers who do not possess an affiliative style.

In a classroom, a teacher can inadvertently exclude some of his students from participation, by simply looking more in the direction of those who sit up front or those who are his better students and whom he likes. While the brighter and more interested students continue to receive the bulk of the teacher's attention and remain interested and responsive, the less able ones receive little attention, feel left out, and continue to perform poorly. Thus, the teacher's nonverbal behavior subtly functions to enforce a dichotomy between "good" and "poor" students, even though the initial intuitive assignment of a student to one of these two groups may have been quite accidental. If this teacher were to improve his style by distributing his attention more evenly, some of the "poor" students could surprise him. These may be capable students whose performances are especially affected by the emotional ties in a work situation and who perform poorly because they feel rejected and unimportant.

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Nonverbal style can in very indirect ways affect work effectiveness or other dealings outside social situations. In addition to his job history or level of competence, a person's nonverbal style can influence his success in getting a desired position. People who conduct job interviews know that the applicants are not likely to volunteer information about their own weaknesses. So, interviewers look for weaknesses, as well as strengths, in the style in which the applicants relate to them. An ingratiating applicant may be judged unsuited because he gives the impression of being much too dependent. Another applicant might try to appear casual and assume such a relaxed posture as to suggest disrespect and a rebellious quality unsuited for the job.

One of my graduate students, Mark, who was accustomed to an informal relationship with me, had an important request to make of another professor who was visiting our department from England. While making his request in the professor's office, Mark slouched in his chair and braced his foot against the professor's desk. The man was so enraged that he practically threw Mark out of his office.

To this Englishman, Mark's behavior seemed obviously unreasonable and deliberately insulting. In his culture, people are more careful about adhering to prescribed standards of behavior associated with levels of status, and he felt little restraint in expressing his annoyance. Had the professor been American born, Mark's foot on his desk might not have been sufficiently offensive to seem insulting, but it would probably have aroused a negative reaction—seeming "out of place." Nothing would have been said about it, and Mark would have had little opportunity to understand a possibly uncooperative attitude toward his request.

A lonely person's behavior provides another example of problem styles. Some people are alone by choice; but a person who is unhappily aware of loneliness may be the source of his own misery. The factor that seems to hold others off at a distance may consist simply of his failure to put a stranger at ease and show a receptive and interested attitude [114].

In our experiments [122, 123], we have repeatedly seen the following rapid succession of events when two strangers are asked to wait in a room together. As they enter that room, there is usually a brief mutual glance, and frequently one or both smile. As they sit down, some resolve the initial discomfort by looking about and seeming interested in the objects around them. This kind of "escape" makes it even more difficult to start a conversation later on, with a consequent long and painful silence. There are others who look at the other person and smile as they enter and, soon after being seated, say something. A brief comment at this time is usually sufficient to break the ice; the conversation then starts with topics that are relevant to the immediate situation and proceeds to more personal issues.

Lonely people who would like to make new friends fail because they do the wrong things during these initial and critical moments. They avoid the other person's gaze, they do not smile, or they seem preoccupied with other things. All of this discourages any comment from the other person, who does not realize that this apparent unfriendliness is due to a considerable discomfort and an inability to cope with it.

National styles

There have been very few scientific studies of the distinctive nonverbal styles of national groups. We all, as we travel, enjoy observing people, and the following are some informal observations of my own, described in terms of the concepts proposed in this volume.

The sidewalk cafes that are so much a part of life in France are indicative of a general and distinctive aspect of the French social style. The prevalence of these sidewalk cafes indicates a lesser tendency to set up social barriers and the Frenchman's lack of reservation about exposing himself to strangers. What a Frenchman eats, how he eats it, and whom he eats with are part of a public spectacle accessible to any passerby. The pinnacle of this phenomenon is the small French town, where loudspeakers are strategically placed in the central square so that the local radio station can be heard clearly throughout this busy area. This central square functions almost as a living room, where people spend a lot of their leisure time, simply seated at cafe tables or on public benches, socializing, and listening to the music.

The characteristic willingness to expose intimate affairs to strangers is evident in an incident that I witnessed. While I sat in a cafe, the lady owner almost continuously yelled at a young girl who was working for her. This public expression of negative feelings, which would have drawn others' attention and concern in the United States, did not seem to have any effect on the Frenchmen in that cafe. The whole thing seemed to be taken for granted.

These examples illustrate the French people's greater preference for immediacy and less emphasis on privacy as compared to Americans. Of course, such observations would occur more in small towns, among fellow Frenchmen, and when familiar faces are around than otherwise.

The English also spend a considerable amount of time socializing in public places. These, however, differ from the French in that the pubs and restaurants where they meet are indoors. The one facet of their social style that distinguishes them from North Americans is their extreme emphasis on affiliation, particularly among social equals. The general atmosphere that prevails in the frequently encountered English pub, a public beer parlor, is the liveliness of a friendly cocktail party. People stand at the bar, sit at the tables, or stand in available open spaces, wherever they wish, and converse in groups, moving about with their drinks.

The informality of these pubs is considerably enhanced by the absence of waiters and waitresses, and the complete freedom to move the furniture about to suit one's needs. These pubs, which are frequent gathering places, epitomize the Englishman's great desire for informal affiliation and characterize his friendliness—remember our cluster of affiliative behavior and what it includes. The contrasting stereotype of the "aloof" British may have arisen in situations where there were clear-cut status differences, as in the British colonies.

Edward T. Hall [68, 70] has described the social styles of various other cultural groups. One striking difference between Arabs and Americans is that the former are more likely to stand closer, touch, orient more directly, and speak louder; in other words, Arabs are more immediate [167]. In fact, they sometimes stand close enough to use the quality of each other's breath as an important and personal source of information. Latin Americans prefer a closer talking distance than do North Americans. Thus, if a Latin American and a North American converse standing up, the Latin tends to move closer and the North American tends to back away, each seeking to maintain his own habitual distance [68]. They both come away from an interaction thinking that there is something wrong with the other.

Since the acceptable standards for nonverbal behavior vary, certain behaviors that are normal for other cultures but alien in our own can assume great importance for us. Alternatively, a behavior that seems common and insignificant in our culture may have great implications for foreigners [39, 68]. It is easy, however, to overstress the differences in the nonverbal codes of various cultures. The basic metaphors that we have described for understanding nonverbal behavior in this culture can be applied equally to other cultures. The differences in the interpretation of a certain behavior arise from the different standards that have been set, in terms of what is acceptable and what is not. For example, for Latins the acceptable distance range is generally closer to others than it is for North Americans.

Summary

Our social style can be described in terms of its affiliative, responsive, relaxed, ingratiating, or distressed quality. Each of these qualities is a composite of several interrelated behaviors, which together describe a unified theme. People differ from one another in terms of how much of each of these qualities they consistently exhibit across a variety of situations. Some are affiliative most of the time; they are comfortable to associate with and are good company. Others are ingratiating no matter what the circumstances; and their excessive positiveness, frequent questioning, and eagerness to please make them appear clinging and dependent. There are yet others, who are sensitive to rejection; these people are so tense and "uptight" that they are unapproachable. Then there are the domineering and relaxed persons, who contrast sharply with the tense and timid ones.

These qualities may also blend together. For example, not only is the extrovert affiliative, but he is also likely to assume a more dominant role, such as taking the lead in guiding a relationship or situation into a pleasant course. In contrast, the introvert is not only passive and submissive but also seems unable or unwilling to affiliate. Again, compared with men, women not only are generally more affiliative but also are more submissive in their social style.

These social styles, which are uncontrolled and often unintended parts of our behavior, can have persistent beneficial or disturbing effects not only in social but also work-related situations. An undesirable style can be corrected through simple feedback about how one seems to others (such as watching a videorecording of oneself in the presence of others). Other methods, which rely on a more active role-playing of styles that are different from one's own, can be even more effective in bringing about a greater awareness and a change for the better.

Suggested readings

For experimental reports of the scoring and grouping of nonverbal and implicit verbal behaviors which define various social styles, see the reports of Robert F. Bales [11], Howard M. Rosenfeld [148, 149], and related work done in our laboratory [112, 120, 129]. Discussions of ethnic and cultural differences in social styles are given in the work of a variety of investigators [12, 39, 68, 70, 87, 167]. A general discussion of problem styles and how to change them can be found in my book *Tactics of Social Influence* [115].

5

Environments and social style

Does the effectiveness of our social style change as we move from one situation to another? Are there cities, towns, or specific locations in which we find it easier to initiate and maintain intimate conversations that are not only meaningful but also fun?

In recent years, psychologists have focused increasing attention on the effects of environments [31, 131, 144, 160, 174]. In this chapter, we shall consider the specific issue of the beneficial or adverse effects of environments on social interaction. In some very subtle though persistent ways, a person's surroundings affect his nonverbal behavior and his social style.

In small towns, where most people are only too well acquainted with each other, adequate social interactions present no problem. However, with the massive movement of populations into the large metropolitan centers, the problems of loneliness and social alienation have become increasingly prominent. Much has been written about the destructive and inhuman quality of cities [59, 60]: People are somehow kept apart, intimacy is discouraged, and meaningful relationships with neighbors, coworkers, or strangers one might meet on a bus or train, in a park or a museum are nonexistent. However, little has been learned about the causes of this alienation and how to counteract them.

The problem of alienation is not restricted to our relationships with strangers. Even with our acquaintances, and whether we are in someone else's home or our own, in a restaurant, or simply taking a walk, there is a constant struggle to somehow maintain meaningful relationships.

To see how the physical environment can help or hinder in this struggle, let us examine some situations in which, for no apparent reason, there is a quality of discomfort.

We all know places in which conversation and spontaneous good times occur with great regularity and others in which the conversation never seems to get off the ground, where every verbal exchange is an uphill labor, and a vague discomfort pervades. What makes the difference? Is it the different people in each place? Not entirely—we have all been part of gatherings that subtly changed character with only a change of setting: from the dining room to the living room, from the automobile to the restaurant, from the parlor to the patio.

Evidently, tasteful and even comfortable furnishings are not the answer either. We are reminded of countless "living" rooms, as beautifully furnished as a showroom but left just as unoccupied while the guests cluster happily in the kitchen and enjoy themselves there. At the University of California, Berkeley, the public rooms in the college dormitories—spacious, airy, well lighted and handsomely furnished—were intended to be a place for the dormies to "rap," to become acquainted, to "live" in. Regrettably, these lounges are somehow afflicted with the same living room malady—the dormies stay away in droves [166].

Put simply, some rooms are avoided and others are sought. Why? What are the factors that make some rooms succeed as social spaces and others fail?

Humphry Osmond was one of the first to consider these questions [139, 140]. In his studies of hospitals, he described as *sociofugal* areas that seemed to drive people apart and as *sociopetal* those that seemed to bring people closer together. However, he did not describe the physical attributes of the two areas—how a sociofugal space differs from a sociopetal one. So the question now becomes "What physical factors in a given space inhibit or facilitate social interaction?"

Liking and affiliation

To study this question, it is first necessary to identify the major components of social interaction. The evidence already reviewed in Chapter 4 shows that, although there are other important parts, affiliative behavior is the most important aspect of social interaction. Our own studies of affiliation led to its definition as a composite of the following behaviors: amount of conversation, eye contact (or mutual gaze) between the persons involved, positiveness of their statements to one another, pleasantness of their facial expressions, and the frequency of their head nodding and hand and arm gesturing [120, 129].

The correlated cues that define affiliation include almost all the subtle verbal and nonverbal behaviors that people use to communicate liking to one another. Thus, affiliation can be considered a process of exchanging positive reinforcers, or liking [120]. The perpetuation of affiliation, in turn, depends on the variety of means available for conveying positive feelings. So, very simply, if a setting facilitates the exchange or development of liking among people, it is conducive to affiliation and therefore to social interaction on the whole.

Of course, a person's reaction in a specific instance varies, depending on his general predisposition to be positive to others and on the person with whom he is interacting. This is understandable intuitively and has also been experimentally verified [120, 129]. However, of more interest here is how the behavior of a person is further influenced by his physical environment. Any setting, be it an office, a park, or a whole city itself, can influence the affiliation that people exhibit in many ways. For instance, the design of certain neighborhoods or apartment buildings seems to make it easier for neighbors to get to know each other; offices, both in terms of architecture and interior design, can be planned to minimize or maximize social interaction.

We shall ~~discuss~~ also consider some of the more subtle contributions of the arrangements of people within spaces to their feelings toward one another. But first, let us consider one powerful and straightforward principle that bears on these issues. People tend to be more pleasant (reinforcing) to one another and to like each other better when they interact in pleasant, rather than unpleasant, settings [64]. In other words, the good feelings that are aroused by a setting generalize [83] to the people within it; alternatively, negative feelings aroused by unpleasant situations also get generalized to the people in such places.

Thus, in hot and crowded rooms people feel more negative in general, and toward each other in particular, than in comfortable temperatures and when there are fewer persons around [65]. These findings with people provide some of the best currently available data on the socially undesirable effects of crowding that were first observed in rats [25]. The principle explains some of the differences in social climates both within the same city or between different cities (for example, a crowded section of Manhattan compared with a suburb of New York City; or New York City compared with Los Angeles). Such evidence provides considerable support for the informal observations of the more hostile and generally inconsiderate and negative attitudes of persons who live in more congested areas.

Liking and immediacy

Another concept which should be considere is that of immediacy.

The ~~concept of~~ *immediacy* can describe best the effects of a given space on the people who meet and/or interact there. Immediacy refers to the extent of mutual sensory stimulation between two persons and is measured in terms of spatio-temporal proximity or by the number of "communication channels" that are available [112, 170]. Communication channels are the means by which one conveys his thoughts and feelings to another; examples include words, facial expressions, tone of voice, postures, and movements. Thus, the closer two people are to each other, the more immediate their interaction. Sitting side by side is less immediate than an arrangement that permits them to face each other more directly. The greater immediacy associated with more channels for communication is illustrated as follows: telegrams and letters are two of the least immediate ways of communicating, permitting the verbal channel alone.

These are followed in order by telephone conversations (verbal and vocal channels), conversations on a picturephone (verbal, vocal, and facial), and face-to-face meetings.

! ! Immediacy and liking are two sides of the same coin. That is, liking encourages greater immediacy and immediacy produces more liking. Our research evidence has consistently shown that when people like each other or when they are basically more friendly or affiliative, they choose to be more immediate. When together they sit closer, orient more directly, lean toward each other, touch, have more eye contact, and converse more [111, 113]. Everyday observations suggest that people who like each other and live in different cities choose the most immediate possible means of communicating (subject, of course, to cost considerations); visits are preferred over telephone conversations, and telephone conversations over letters. And whatever means they use, they use it more often the more they like someone.

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On the other side of the coin, opportunities for increased immediacy can foster greater liking [178]. Available reviews of this literature provide consistent support for the idea [15]. For instance, studies of college students have shown that people who had more opportunities to be closer together, whether in their dormitories, apartments, or classes, more often tended to form friendships and like one another [22, 24, 52, 93, 171]. Similarly, persons in various occupations who were assigned working positions closer to one another were more likely to develop closer relationships and to like each other more [66, 84, 179]. The following comments of Leon Festinger, which were quoted by Ellen Berscheid and Elaine Walster [15], are based on a study of developing friendships in a new housing project, where few residents had previously known each other. It is evident that the architecturally determined and accidental arrangement of persons can have dramatic effects on their relationships [51, 53].

> It is a fair summary to say that the two major factors affecting the friendships which developed were (1) sheer distance between houses and (2) the direction in which a house faced. Friendships developed more frequently between next-door neighbors, less frequently between people whose houses were separated by another house, and

> so on. As the distance between houses increased, the number of friendships fell off so rapidly that it was rare to find a friendship between persons who lived in houses that were separated by more than four or five other houses. . . .
>
> There were instances in which the site plan of the project had more profound effects than merely to determine with whom one associated. Indeed, on occasion the arrangements of the houses severely limited the social life of their occupants. . . . In order to have the street appear "lived on," ten of the houses near the street had been turned so that they faced the street rather than the court area as did the other houses. This apparently small change in the direction in which a house faced had a considerable effect on the lives of the people who, by accident, happened to occupy these end houses. They had less than half as many friends in the project as did those whose houses faced the court area. The consistency of this finding left no doubt that the turning of these houses toward the street had made involuntary social isolates out of the persons who lived in them [51, pp. 156–157].

The results from some of these studies can be attributed to the fact that some of the persons were friends to begin with and elected to become close neighbors because of this friendship. However, in a number of the studies, strangers were accidentally assigned close or far positions to one another and it was found that closeness led to greater liking [53, 136]. Thus, it follows that the greater immediacy was indeed instrumental in enhancing the possibility of liking and friendships.

Some of the classical prejudice studies have shown also that housing projects that permit people of different races to live in close proximity lessen their prejudices toward one another [173, 176]. In these studies, the immediacy afforded by the design of the movement paths and the availability of common work and recreation areas served to increase liking. If increased contact can reduce negative (prejudicial) feelings and even convert them to positive ones, then its effect should be even more profound in cases where the initial attitudes are neutral, as would be the case with two strangers.

One important exception, however, should be noted: When *hostile* groups of persons are brought together, the increased contact does nothing to improve their relations [157].

Check out the relation between immediacy and liking for yourself by first listing the names of ten acquaintances. Next rate each of these on a scale of liking that ranges from −3 (extreme dislike) to +3 (extreme liking). Now make two groups out of these persons, the five whom you meet most frequently and the others whom you encounter least frequently. What is the average liking score you have assigned to each of these two groups?

The relationship between immediacy and liking must also be qualified in two ways, both of which are based on the fact that excessive immediacy is undesirable. There are limits to how much immediacy a person can tolerate even with someone he likes, so understandably those tolerance limits would be smaller among strangers. When strangers who cannot tolerate excessive immediacy approach each other, they tend to orient away and use less eye contact, to compensate for the increasing closeness [7, 8]. In one study, when a stranger, the experimenter, took a seat very close to the subject, that subject left his seat sooner than others who had not been approached in this way [50]. Elevators tend to be uncomfortable for most people; forced into a small space with strangers, they avoid each other's gaze by staring at the floor or watching the lighted, floor-indicator panel above the doors. Some observations suggest that the introduction of some distraction, such as a painting, into an elevator can ease the situation [156, p. 25].

Just as people will not spontaneously select any overly immediate relationship, it is also true that excessive immediacy that is forced upon them, as a function of their environment, will be unpleasant and will have negative consequences. Studies have shown dramatic effects of crowding on animals: massive die-offs, social disorganization, and excessive aggression [25, 29]. The unpleasantness of crowding is partially responsible for the current demand for privacy, a demand that is voiced the loudest in congested urban areas.

Thus, the ideal environment would be one that provides opportunities for immediacy as well as privacy, so that immediate contacts are a matter of choice and are readily available. A similar idea has been used in the study of mental institutions [144]. Although excessive crowding can have negative consequences, it may still be preferred if a person feels that the crowding does not restrict his freedom. This explains the difference in the feelings that are aroused in a crowded subway compared with those experienced in a crowded discothèque.

Immediacy between dwelling units

Given these general ideas, it is possible to illustrate the ways in which man-made environments can be optimally designed to encourage social interaction, particularly among persons who are strangers to each other. A consideration of immediacy can influence the design of living spaces at all levels—from urban renewal projects, to the architecture of a building or apartment complex, to interior design and furniture arrangement. When the design of living and working spaces minimizes the frequency and duration of meetings, it minimizes immediacy. On the other hand, if the environment permits opportunities for frequent and prolonged contacts among its inhabitants, perhaps by common paths, common shopping, work, hobby, and recreation areas or attractive gathering places, it can be conducive to better feelings. In short, areas that attract people and hold them in close proximity lay the groundwork for affiliation. Consider some good and bad instances.

Urban sprawl, which necessitates the use of cars for most activities, especially when public transportation is inadequate, results in decreased immediacy of the inhabitants of cities. Whereas people in small towns have frequent and repeated encounters with each other as they go about the daily business of living, this is not possible for persons who may travel miles from their homes for work, shopping, school, church, and recreation. Neighborhoods in such cities could be made more conducive to immediacy, however, by introducing more sidewalks, bicycling trails, and parks—provided people felt safe to use them. Police departments may find this of value in improving public relations in some areas by returning to the good old tradition of the policeman walking the beat instead of patrolling in cars.

On a smaller scale, the typical apartment buildings, with several stacked floors of apartments opening off long hallways, also decrease chances for immediacy. In such buildings people meet only briefly when riding the elevator or passing in a hallway. These encounters are few, compared to meetings in other apartment complexes in which units open on courtyards through which each resident must go in order to enter his apartment. In this second case, lawn chairs placed in the yard can enhance immediacy, provided, of course, that residents use them.

A large academic department recently acquired a "beautiful" new building—and experienced a surprising and drastic reduction in the number of contacts among the faculty. Before the expansion, most of the faculty were concentrated on three floors, had offices close together, and were continually passing one another in the hallways. Now they are scattered throughout a ten-story building and only occasionally meet in passing. Had anyone considered the advantages of immediacy, the design of the new building could have included arrangements to maintain the frequent interactions. Perhaps offices could have been concentrated on only a few floors, or open central spaces could have been included and furnished comfortably to allow informal contacts.

The primary reason for visiting such comfortably furnished areas (or the courtyard with the lawn chairs in the case of the apartments) may not be to socialize, but social interaction would be likely. Some people use the swimming pool of an apartment complex for a daily workout, but often residents visit the pool area without any intention of actually swimming. For them, the pool's apparent function is actually quite secondary to that of bringing strangers together and providing an excuse to maintain proximity.

One aspect of personality that has an effect in such situations is what we have called "sensitivity to rejection." Whenever people meet, a factor that influences the nature and extent of their interaction is the fear of being slighted [127]. This fear acts as a deterrent, so that even though two or more people may be interested in getting acquainted, they still feel hesitant about initiating contact without some reassurance from the others.

Most of the findings in affiliation research can be understood in terms of this approach-avoidance model: Each person is drawn to others, but at the same time his fear of rejection discourages him from making contact [129].

There are vast individual differences in the desire to affiliate and the tendency to fear rejection, and the proper environment can exert a great influence on how people act. For instance, an environment that enhances immediacy could provide those who are excessively sensitive with an excuse to be close to others, while simultaneously inducing more frequent contacts among those who simply lack the desire to affiliate. Those who are sensitive would have a chance to probe new relations cautiously, and the less affiliative persons might find the contacts rewarding.

Many puzzling phenomena in today's lonely societies can be better understood in terms of the idea that some settings or occasions, ostensibly planned for another purpose, perform the important function of bringing people together and fostering interaction. For instance, political or ideological convictions are only part of the reason why so many people actively participate in demonstrations or other "happenings." An important function of these gatherings—and one that has not been stressed—is that they bring together great numbers of people who hold similar beliefs and attitudes, who share a life style. Findings from different sources have shown that contacts with similar, rather than dissimilar, others are sought more because these are more likely to be successful or mutually rewarding [23, 114, 128].

Immediacy within dwelling units

So far, we have developed the conceptual tools to analyze the quality of environments that is conducive to socializing and have briefly sketched their application to the design of buildings or the relations among dwelling units. How about the application of these ideas to the interior space of a single room? What can be done to the furnishings of a room to foster interaction? Let us consider in some detail the findings from a few recent experiments [122, 123]. In these experiments, we concerned ourselves primarily with two questions: (1) How does immediacy of an arrangement (that is, the distance between the various seats and the relative angles at which seats are placed) affect social interaction? (2) What do decorative objects in a room do to the interaction that occurs there?

In terms of what has already been said about immediacy, it was expected that closer positions and more direct orientations would enhance conversation, provided that the combined contribution of closeness and directness was not excessive. Four distances (3, 4.5, 6, and 9 feet) and three orientations (zero degrees or face to face, 90 degrees or at right angles, and 180 degrees or side by side) were selected so that the twelve resulting combinations would provide a considerable range of immediacy in seating arrangement. For instance, the 3-foot, face-to-face position would represent excessive immediacy, and the 9-foot, 180-degree position would be much too nonimmediate. For the entire range, then, it was expected that conversation would increase with increasing immediacy, except for the excessively immediate positions.

Concerning our second question, it seemed that room furnishings and decorative objects could be described in two groups: those, such as artwork, that are unusual, interesting, and the subject of conversation, in contrast to those such as books, magazines, or puzzles that are the objects of individual preoccupation. We therefore introduced an example of each type in one of the experiments [123].

To avoid the confounding of results by already existing friendly relationships or by physical attraction, 400 pairs of same-sexed strangers were employed as subjects in the experiments. The subjects' affiliative tendency and sensitivity to rejection were assessed with questionnaire measures [116] so that we could explore the ways in which the environmental variables affected different kinds of persons.

For our first two experiments, we used the same basic design but used different rooms and different instructions. In the first, a pair of strangers entered a room in which there were two comfortable, upholstered armchairs placed in one of the twelve possible arrangements (four distances × three orientations). The pair were asked to sit down and wait for a few minutes until we returned to begin the experiment. Five minutes were allowed to elapse before the experimenter returned with the personality questionnaires and asked the subjects to complete them. Presumably, taking these tests constituted the experiment. However, during the five-minute period, the subjects' interaction was observed through a one-way mirror and recorded. Later, a composite affiliative behavior score was computed for each member of the pair, based on each person's amount of conversation and positiveness, using cues that were noted in Chapter 4.

In the second experiment, we used the same chairs in the same twelve positions; but the room was smaller and carpeted, and the one-way mirrors were camouflaged. This time, subjects thought they were participating in a music-listening experiment, and during their five minutes alone together they were supposedly waiting for the experimenter to prepare the tape recorder for the music. They actually listened to some music, rated it, and also filled out the personality questionnaires.

The results of the two experiments were similar. Subjects who had obtained high scores on the affiliative-tendency measure were more affiliative in the waiting situation. In the more stressful and ambiguous first experiment, subjects with high scores on sensitivity to rejection were less affiliative during the waiting period. These results support the common-sense idea that people do indeed consistently differ from one another in terms of their affiliative patterns.

In both experiments, orientation had the greatest effect on conversation. The 180-degree or side-by-side position consistently produced less affiliation, whereas the 90-degree angle was only slightly less conducive to conversation than the face-to-face position. Neither experiment showed an overall effect for distance. The second experiment did, however, show that when both subjects in a pair were sensitive to rejection they affiliated less when they were seated at greater distances. This same effect was obtained in another experiment involving four strangers waiting in a group [122]. Thus, if we ignore the personality differences of participants, distance alone does not have a strong enough effect to show up in the averages; but it can be detrimental to conversation for those who are sensitive to rejection—people who could be expected to gain most from environmental improvements.

Both experiments suggested strongly that our traditional practice of furnishing the living room with a long sofa leaves much to be desired, since sitting on a sofa involves the conversation-crippling 180-degree orientation. When two persons sit on the same sofa, they tend to occupy the end seats. If they wish to interact, they shift sideways so as to assume a more direct orientation. This action essentially inactivates the seating spaces still remaining between them, because a third person is reluctant to place himself in the center of their communication lane. Thus, the conversationally effective seating capacity of a straight sofa, whatever its length, is only two people. It inhibits interaction still more when those seated on it are strangers. The postural adjustments that friends would casually make to gain more eye contact indicate a greater commitment and more informality than one can readily assume with a stranger, at least until the other has demonstrated some interest.

In plain words, to minimize interaction in a room, furnish it with straight sofas, preferably around the perimeter. Photographs of the dorm lounges at Berkeley reveal that this is precisely how they are arranged [166]. The same plan is also typical of dayrooms in mental hospitals. While such an arrangement may be convenient for the cleaning staff or the nurses and attendants of a hospital, it is less easily justified in our living rooms—places where pleasant social interaction is intended to be the primary function.

The first useful principle for designing seating areas, then, is that maximum number of pairs of seats should be placed at intermediate levels of immediacy (that is, about four feet apart and oriented from face-to-face position to 90-degree angle). In fact, any arrangement can be characterized in terms of the average distance and orientation between all possible pairs of seats. The average immediacy afforded by all pairs could serve as a measure of the conversation-facilitating effect of the arrangement.

Our third experiment explored the contribution of decorative objects to conversation. We used a waiting situation such as that in the second experiment, with subjects always seated 4½ feet apart at right angles. An abstract sculpture, serving as a conversation piece, and a difficult puzzle poster were readily visible to both subjects. The experiment focused more on those who are sensitive to rejection. We had already seen how smaller distances helped the conversation of pairs who were sensitive to rejection. Could a "conversation piece" have been of any special value to such persons? Would it be easier to initiate a conversation, since venturing a remark about the object, rather than about some personal matter, would not leave one so vulnerable to rebuff? The puzzle was also introduced to maximize individual differences. It was expected that a less affiliative person would tend to busy himself with the puzzle and ignore the stranger waiting with him.

Affiliative behavior was measured from audiorecordings, as in the previous experiments. In addition, separate notations were made of the lengths of time each subject spent looking at the sculpture and the puzzle. Preoccupation with the puzzle was indeed found to be inversely related to affiliation; those who affiliated more spent less time with the puzzle. The sculpture was not equally important and did not have the same effect for all different pairings of subjects. Only pairs whose members were both sensitive to rejection seemed to benefit measurably from its presence. It was somehow instrumental in allowing them to agree more often (that is, reinforce each other), to be generally more positive and converse more.

A second useful principle in the design of seating areas, then, is that an environment can facilitate interaction if it provides an excuse for people to engage in a similar activity in close proximity to one another. This activity can be, and perhaps must be, ostensibly unrelated to socializing; it is especially helpful to persons who need the most help in these matters—those who are sensitive to rejection.

Consider the arrangement of furniture in your own living room, in various living rooms of homes you have visited, in various family or recreation rooms. Do the arrangements tend to foster *or to inhibit interaction? Recall waiting rooms you may have known (doctor's office, airport terminal, the local laundromat, hotel lobbies)—do they encourage or discourage immediacy for strangers? If you have the opportunity, note the conversations of those who sit in front of an aquarium at a bar. How do these differ from other conversations initiated between strangers in other spots where no ready conversation piece is available? Or just think of the homes of your different friends who have done their own interior designing. How do the "warm and inviting" living rooms differ physically from those that seem cold and reserved?*

Summary

The experiments described in this chapter have only touched the perimeter of a vast and unexplored area; they indicate that the immediacy of relationships that is subtly dictated by the environment does indeed affect social interaction. Strangers who happen to occupy rooms, apartments, or working areas that increase the frequency of their contacts because of closeness are found to get to like each other more. These findings have many implications for the design of cities and buildings, as well as the interiors of buildings. For instance, in the case of furniture arrangement, more direct orientations and closer positions facilitate conversation. Even though excessively immediate, that is, face-to-face and very close, positions do not hinder conversation, they are not conducive to comfort; people tend to be less relaxed in these positions.

The findings involving distance and sensitivity to rejection help to clarify why strangers have so much trouble interacting in nonimmediate positions, such as across vast expanses of living room. Large distances discourage the conversation of those who are sensitive to rejection, particularly when others are present. Our interpretation is that in these situations, fear of seeming silly or unintelligent makes it difficult just to say something outright. For those who are sensitive to rejection this problem is even more accentuated.

In addition to the immediacy relations, the objects in a setting can also affect social interaction. These can be broadly grouped into those that encourage isolated activity as distinct from those which can mediate the relationship between two persons. Thus, the swimming pool in the apartment complex or the sculpture in a living room provide means of implicitly communicating a shared interest, by highlighting the common theme in the participants' actions—they are all out to relax beside the pool, or they are both interested in a piece of art. In the context of the greater immediacy and shared activity, it is easier to initiate conversation with an offhand comment. Further, agreements with such comments (remember the mutual reinforcements of those who were sensitive to rejection in the third experiment) provide the necessary reassurance to proceed with a more meaningful exchange.

Suggested readings

General treatments of the effects of environments on a variety of behaviors including interpersonal ones are given in Harold Proshansky, William Ittelson, and Leanne Rivlin's *Environmental Psychology* [144] and in *An Approach to Environmental Psychology* by James Russell and myself [131]. Details of some interesting studies of the effects of immediacy on liking among strangers are given in Dean Barnlund's *Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies* [Houghton Mifflin, 1968]; in Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter, and Kurt Back's *Social Pressures in Informal Groups: A Study of Human Factors in Housing* [53]; and in Theodore Newcomb's *The Acquaintance Process* [136]. Finally, reviews and experimental studies of the contribution of seating arrangement to social interaction are given in two reports by Shirley Diamond and myself [122, 123] and in Robert Sommer's *Personal Space* [160].

6

A language within language

In describing what his girl friend did, John could say, "Mike was dancing with her," "She was dancing with Mike," or "They were dancing together." These three statements show increasing degrees of John's acceptance of what his girl friend did.

Bob could describe his activity to his wife as follows: "Alice and I danced," "She and I danced," "I danced with her," "She danced with me," or "I had to dance with her," depending, perhaps, on his feelings about liking Alice or about his wife's reaction—the last statement being, of course, the most cautious.

Talking about a party you attended, you say, "The food was pretty good," "They had a good time," "They were having a good time," "We had a good time," or "I had a good time." All these are different ways of making a positive statement about the party; however, when analyzed in some detail, they show interesting differences in feeling.

Previous chapters have emphasized the role of silent messages in social interaction. In cultures like our own, these constant companions of what we say constitute an important way of conveying feelings and evaluations, the expression of which would otherwise sometimes be unacceptable. Increased focus on the nonverbal modes may help to overcome the handicapping reliance on words in communication, at least as communication skills are formally taught, and may contribute to a better understanding of the significance of various gestures, postures, and expressions. Let us now note the numerous and frequently overlooked subtleties of speech itself that are part of the expression of feelings, evaluations, and preferences [33, 92, 103].

Distance in time and place

The stylistic differences of the sentences selected to express a certain idea can be used to infer (1) feelings toward the thing being described, (2) feelings toward the listener, or (3) feelings about the act of saying certain things to a certain listener [170]. Here again, we shall use the important concept of immediacy in making inferences about positive-negative feelings revealed in any of these three cases. Notice the difference in each of the following pairs: "Here they are," "There they are"; "These peopel need help," "Those people need help"; "I can't understand this man," "I can't understand that man"; "I am showing Liz my collection of etchings," "I have been showing Liz my collection of etchings." In each example, the first sentence of the pair is the more immediate one. This is due to the particular use of demonstrative pronouns ("this" or "these" versus "that" or "those"), adjectives ("here," "there"), or verb tense (present versus past).

There are many situations in which either an immediate or nonimmediate form can effectively be used to communicate the verbal message, and thus the particular usage becomes significant [132]. For instance, in talking about a minority group, the speaker who says, "Those people need help" is putting the group further away from himself in this very subtle verbal form than when he says, "These people need help." Consider another example: As a woman enters a crowded room, two men exclaim simultaneously. One says, "Here's Kathy"; the other says, "There's Kathy." It turns out that the first is her current favored escort; the second used to be.

When the form of demonstrative pronoun or tense used is incongruous with the time or place of the actual event, it suggests some special feelings of the speaker [106]. For example, a person says, "I don't understand those people," about some people in the room with him. His demonstrative "those" is incongruous for the situation, which is here and now. In another example, John is showing Mary his cherished collection of plants when his wife, Tina, joins them. When he says, "I am showing Mary the plants," he places the entire activity in the present tense and doubtless is easy in his own mind about the activity. This is closer in time to the actual activity than if he were to say, "I have been showing Mary the plants" or "I showed Mary the plants." If John uses one of the less immediate forms, he may be revealing his awareness of Tina's jealousy of Mary's attentiveness to him or, even though Tina does not mind what she considers to be an innocent relationship, he may feel some edge of uneasiness about his own interest in Mary.

These kinds of nonimmediacy involve putting something at a physical distance through the use of demonstrative pronouns or at a temporal distance through the use of past tenses. But nonimmediacy can be indicated in other ways, one of which is mention of the more unpleasant, or less pleasant, things later in a sequence [106]. Such ordering can occur when we describe different parts of an event or situation. We might refer to a couple we know as "John and Marge," to another couple as "Jane and Jack," and yet another couple as "the Browns." In the first case, chances are that John is the more important, better-known, or better-liked member of the pair. In the second case, Jane may be the more important or better-liked member. In the last case, perhaps neither one of the pair is well known to the speaker, or there is a certain formality and social distance in the relationship with these people.

In describing a day's activities I could say, "We went to the bank, shopped, and visited some friends"; or I could say, "We visited some friends, shopped, and also went to the bank." Assuming that neither one of these orders corresponds to the actual sequence of events, it is safe to infer that the first item mentioned is probably the more important or the more preferred part of the day's activities. In some situations, we may have the necessary information to be able to consider the actual sequence of events and the way in which it is recited in a description. If an event that actually occurred first in the sequence is mentioned last, perhaps the speaker does not like it as well as he does the other items and has delayed mentioning it quite unintentionally. Even stronger negative feelings are implied when he leaves out an item entirely.

If you've had psychotherapy, remember the order in which you described your problems to the therapist in the initial interview.

In the psychotherapy situation, when we mention something first it is not because we like it more but rather because it is easiest for us to mention that particular problem to a stranger. Thus, another value of the order in which things are mentioned is that it shows how easily certain things can be described to someone else. The general rule for making such interpretations is that nonimmediacy can be due to discomfort about saying a particular thing to a particular listener.

There is a related way in which nonimmediacy comes into play in speech. Hesitant and halting speech with errors, incomplete sentences, and repetition of words indicates anxiety and negative feelings [80, 90, 92]. One would tend to make more errors when talking about a distressing subject than a pleasant one. *Note*: "How did it go at the dentist's?" "Well, uh (pause) it went fine"; "Did you cook dinner?" "I, I thought . . . uh, we could go out tonight." This is reminiscent of Freud's [55] discussion of slips of the tongue—a special kind of error, which, in his view, reveals conflicts in the speaker and negative feelings to aspects of the current situation. What, indeed, is the function of halting and faltering speech? Halting speech delays the completion of a statement. Errors associated with such speech make the descriptions less effective, more difficult to understand, and generally inhibit the communication process. In this sense, the errors serve to delay what a person has to say and lead us to infer that he has at least some reservations about saying it.

The form of reference

We can show a less positive feeling toward something by putting it at a distance; by avoiding any mention of it; or, as in the following examples, by referring to it in ambiguous ways [99].

This ambiguity makes it more difficult for our listeners to understand what exactly our statement refers to and reflects our unwillingness to express a certain idea in a certain situation.

One important source of ambiguity of reference is the *overinclusive* statement. Let us say that a friend has recommended a certain restaurant; and, to your chagrin, you have tried it. You have put off mentioning anything about it to him (already, one kind of nonimmediacy), but he asks you, "How did you like your dinner at One-Eyed Joe's?" You say, "It was a pleasant evening" instead of "It was a pleasant dinner." You use the more inclusive term "evening" which involves a broader set of events, thus making an ambiguous positive remark. With this kind of overinclusive statement the involvement with a particular event is minimized since the stated relation includes many parts in addition to the specific referent in question (for example, "evening" includes other events apart from "dinner").

There are two ways of making such overinclusive statements: (1) placing the referent within a more comprehensive category and (2) including oneself within a larger group of people. If I am asked, "How do you like Wanda?" and answer, "I like the Smiths," I have not specifically referred to Wanda in my answer but rather have referred to her and her husband, the Smiths, thereby minimizing involvement. It could be that I have reservations about Wanda or that I am unwilling to say what I feel about her to the person who asked me the question. On the other hand, I could have answered, "We like Wanda," implying that my friends and I like her. Using an inclusive "we" instead of "I" in the statement dilutes the relation with Wanda, which is again indicative of less positive feelings.

The use of "we" instead of "I" is a familiar rhetorical device. If a speaker uses both "I" and "we," we can infer which of his statements he feels more strongly about and which are token statements to placate or gratify his listeners. When a speaker feels strongly about the accuracy of some statement or wishes to be identified with a certain proposition, he is more likely to start that sentence with "I." But when he feels less confident about something and does not want to be held responsible for it, he may use the pronoun "we." *Note*: "I believe that the national economy will respond favorably to increase in money supply" versus "We believe . . ." The "we" may refer to the speaker and his wife, to many Americans, or to some economists; it is not altogether clear to the listeners that this is the speaker's particular stand on the issue.

Euphemisms provide a rich source of overinclusive references and their use is motivated by the desire to diminish the negative or distasteful quality of the expression that they replace. "Tickets are available at . . ." instead of "Tickets are sold at . . ." may be popular in advertisements that seek to minimize the implied exchange of money. Familiar examples of such expressions are "passed away" instead of "died"; "exceptional child" instead of "retarded child"; "donation" instead of "price"; "to wash hands" instead of "to go to the bathroom"; and "detention center" instead of "prison."

Many people make up their own euphemisms to refer to disliked persons or events. Can you think of any expressions of this kind that you use only with persons who share the particular negative feeling?

Another way, perhaps more extreme, of diluting the relationship between self and the referent is to make a statement that touches only tangentially on the person or the issue being considered. A question like "What do you think of their marriage?" may be answered with remarks such as "My wife thinks it's great" or "Don't you think it's great?" rather than "I think it's great." In the first two instances, the speaker is implying that not he but someone else thinks the marriage is exceptionally suitable. We may infer that he has some reservations about the soundness of this marriage—or perhaps is simply not particularly interested. Quite frequently, the negative significance of such answers is overlooked, but experimental findings have consistently shown that this kind of nonimmediacy is a powerful indicator of a speaker's negative feelings about what he is discussing. The difference between "I lost control of the car" and the more nonimmediate form, "The car went out of control," can be similarly interpreted. It is evident that the person making the latter statement is unwilling to accept responsibility for the accident.

Elaborate and adept applications of such tangential references to oneself are very common in public speeches and debates when the speaker feels that a remark may be controversial or that it is only weakly supported by facts and reasoning. Common examples are "You would expect," "You'd think," "It would seem to be," "It would be expected," all of which serve as substitutes for "I think" or "I expect." Similar hedging also occurs frequently in scientific writings, in which it is especially important to emphasize the tentative quality of one's ideas.

The complement of tangential reference to self occurs when a subject of distaste is described in such a way that it is unclear who or what is being described. A mother, in referring to her son's fiancée, could say, "our daughter-to-be," "our son's fiancée," "his fiancée," "his lady-friend," "his friend," "she," or "that thing"—showing increasing nonimmediacy and dislike of the girl. Similarly, across the generation gap, a shaven and shorn solid citizen may refer to his hirsute son as "that hippie," while the youth may reciprocate with "that reactionary" or "that uptight square" (if he uses printable epithets).

An interesting variant of the overinclusive statement is *negation*. Following a brief encounter with someone whom we do not really care to meet again, we say, "Why don't we get together sometime?" instead of "Let's get together." If we are enthusiastic about meeting this person again, we actually suggest a time and place for the next meeting. Our negative feelings toward a listener or our feeling that the listener will feel negative about complying with a request can also become evident in examples such as this: "Why don't you type this one first and then go back to what you were doing." In this instance, the executive may use this particular form to request his secretary to change her priorities because he is aware that she will be inconvenienced and will have a negative reaction to his request.

More generally, the "why don't you" statement is likely to occur when the speaker doubts that his request or suggestion will be complied with, either because he feels that his request may sound imposing or demanding, as in the case of the employer, or because he shares little mutual feeling of goodwill with the listener, as in our first example.

Another kind of negation that reveals one's reservations is illustrated by "How did you like the movie?" answered with "It wasn't bad." This answer conveys a feeling different from that indicated by "It was fine." We can understand the difference in terms of the overinclusive quality of "not bad" relative to "fine." The former includes "fine" as well as "so-so," and more than likely the feeling was indeed "so-so." Other examples are "We're not exactly buddies" and "The movie is not the best I've seen."

Think back to the times when you have answered a question in just this way or made such a statement. You probably used this kind of negation because you did not really care for the experience you were describing but, as a matter of politeness or caution, preferred not to express your strong feelings to your listener.

The exact opposite of the overinclusive statement is yet another source of information about feelings. "I dig being with her, for an evening" shows how, in addition to using overinclusive reference, a speaker can also minimize his relation to a referent by using *overspecific* statements. In this case, the "digging" is restricted to an evening, rather than left unqualified. Overspecification arises when we refer to a part of the referent in a context that requires a more complete statement: "How did you like my new production?" is answered with "I liked the acting" instead of simply "I liked it." In saying "I liked (or enjoyed) the acting," the speaker has managed to pick out the one part of the production that he liked best or, which is more likely to be the case, disliked least. An astute and straightforward producer at this point might say, "What was the matter with the rest of it?" More than likely, however, he will simply go on with a discussion of the acting and will fail to consider possible weaknesses in his play that are implied by the remark.

Someone asks you about the ball game he had suggested you go to: "How was the game?" You say, "It was a nice day, and it was fun to be outdoors." These references to the weather and to the outdoors touch only in part on the game and reveal less positive or possibly negative evaluation of the game by you.

Just as overspecificity shows negative feelings when it involves the referent, the same kind of implication is made when it involves the speaker [98]. After an accident, I could say, "My car slid out of control and struck her" instead of "I struck her with my car." In the first statement something associated with me, "my car," is the implied agent responsible for this action; in the second, "I," the actor, am the responsible agent. Someone says, "The thoughts that come to my mind are . . ." instead of "I think. . . ," thus implying that only a part of him, "his thoughts," should be held responsible for what he is to say. A more straightforward example of overspecificity is "His hands touched her hair" instead of "He touched her hair."

In all these cases, a part of the person speaking (his hand, his thoughts) or something that belongs to or is associated with the speaker (his car) is the ostensible actor and the responsible agent in a situation. Thus, we can infer that the speaker does not feel very comfortable about a statement he is going to make, since he is unwilling to assume full responsibility. Indeed, an entire set of nonimmediate statements can be analyzed directly in terms of the desire to minimize responsibility.

Responsibility

As he brings his date back home, a young man says, "I would like to see you again," instead of the less conditional "I want to see you again." In this case, he probably uses the less immediate conditional form because he does not want to seem too forward with a girl he has taken out for the first time or lay himself on the line to be rejected. In other words, he has trouble expressing his enthusiasm about the girl, not because he does not like her, but because there are social sanctions against it or because of the possibility of being turned down.

Usually, the conditional is used when the speaker does not like what he is going to say [102]. *Note*: "You'd think they would do something to improve the quality of service here" instead of "I think they ought to improve the quality of service here." Of course, this example involves at least two kinds of nonimmediacy. One is the use of "you" instead of "I," and the other is the use of the conditional. Here the speaker is trying to avoid seeming domineering or authoritarian to his addressee. Alternatively, the addressee in this case may be connected with the management of the place being criticized, and the speaker may be uncomfortable about being directly critical. Whatever the reason for making such conditional statements, it is obvious that the speaker is trying to imply a lack of familiarity and a weaker relationship with the object being discussed.

When an author sends his manuscript to a publisher and receives the following kind of initial response, he has some reason to wonder whether his manuscript will be accepted. "The manuscript seems very interesting and apparently does a very good job of portraying youth in our society. Our readers are now giving your manuscript a closer look, and I will be getting in touch with you about it." The words "seems" and "apparently" may indicate that the editor has some reserve about the manuscript. In this case, even though the editor is making a number of positive statements, the author probably should not take the letter as an enthusiastic reception of his manuscript.

In a similar minimizing of responsibility, a speaker makes no direct reference to himself: "It is evident that . . . ," "It is obvious that . . . ," or "Most people realize that she's an intolerable bitch." The implication here is that others are responsible for the view being expressed and that the speaker merely shares that view. This device is likely to be used by a speaker who does not wish to be held answerable for what he is going to say and is especially concerned about possible disagreement from his listener. By protecting himself from rebuff in this way, he hints at the quality of his relationship with the listener: They are not likely to agree on this and perhaps many other matters. Experimental findings have consistently shown that people tend to dislike others who hold different opinions and attitudes, that is, those they would disagree with frequently [23, 128]. So in this instance, the implication of expected disagreement of the listener is indicative of negative feelings toward him.

Of course, another way to avoid responsibility for what we say is to qualify our statements. Common forms are "I feel . . . ," "I think . . . ," "It seems to me . . . ," or "It is possible that she's pregnant." With such qualification, the speaker shows his reluctance to make the particular statement as a matter of established fact and again highlights his awareness of possible disagreement from his listeners. This device is also used in gossip. By prefacing a scandalous thought with "I think . . ." or "They say . . . ," the speaker technically avoids responsibility for the truth or falsehood of his statement, yet he still gets the pleasure of saying it.

In some situations, the nonimmediacy and associated negative feeling of the speaker is evident in statements that very obviously seek to minimize his responsibility [63]. A girl who is asked for a date by someone whom she does not like says, "I have to go with someone else," instead of the more straightforward "I prefer (or want) to go with someone else." The nonimmediacy in "I have to" reflects her difficulty in being frank with him.

In departing from a friend's house, we could use the more immediate forms "I am leaving now" or "I want to leave now" instead of nonimmediate forms such as "I should leave now," "I have to leave now," or "I really should leave now." The second set of statements implies that we are leaving, not because we want to, but because of some extraneous circumstances that force us to do so. In other words, something other than our own desires is responsible for the fact that we must leave. This kind of nonimmediacy is used if the relationship with the listener is more formal, less straightforward, and generally one in which feelings cannot be clearly and directly expressed without fear of hurting others.

People tend to attribute responsibility to some external agent in their statement for departing, especially because the act of departure increases nonimmediacy. If we leave a party at 11:00 P.M. instead of 2:00 A.M. or if we are first rather than last to leave, this departure time indicates something about how much we are enjoying the party. So, when we do leave at a time that we think is too early and might lead the host to think we did not enjoy the party (which is actually the case), a statement such as "We've got to get back" helps to save face for the host and provides an easy out for the guest.

When a couple is going to get married, and they tell their friends, "We have to get married." it doesn't take much psychological training for friends to wonder about possible reservations and negative feelings of the engaged couple toward the marriage. But when someone says, "I can't come because I have to see a friend off at the airport," the negative affect is less likely to be detected without knowledge of speech immediacy. We know that he could have said, "I can't come because I am going to see a friend off at the airport."

Another way in which responsibility for an action or a statement is minimized is through the use of the passive rather than the active form. I could say, "The results of my experiments have led me to this conclusion" instead of "I conclude this from my experiments." I would be more likely to use the passive form if I were not quite sure about the results or how they should be interpreted. The use of the passive form in this case implies that anybody else, just like myself, could have been led to the same conclusion, and that I should not be held responsible for making the particular interpretation. However, if I were to use the active form, I would not provide myself with this "out."

You may be able to think of some of your friends or acquaintances who are generally prone to using the passive form when they talk about certain topics. This should give you a clue about their sense of helplessness and consequent negative feelings when these topics are mentioned. Alternatively, if an individual resorts to the passive form more than most others, this could be a sign of his general unwillingness to assume responsibility for his actions.

Examples so far in this section show how avoiding responsibility is generally indicative of negative feelings about the contents of one's communication. There are other times, however, when the sharing of responsibility with the listener, a form of *mutuality*, can be informative about the relation between speaker and listener. *Note*: "Remember what we decided about the office?" instead of "Remember what I suggested about the office?" In the first case, the decision is a mutual one involving the speaker and the listener, whereas in the second the decision is a unilateral one. It involves the speaker alone and implies his separation from the listener, at least in terms of their contribution to this activity [98].

When such expressions occur frequently in a relationship, they can serve as clues about how two people, who are closely involved in either a social or working relationship, feel toward each other. The statements implying mutuality are likely to arise in more positive relationships, since they indicate a more intense involvement of the pair in the activity in which they are engaged. Let us say that two people are having lunch and a third person joins them. At this point, one of the two says, "John and I have been discussing your project" instead of "I have been telling John about your project." Either one of these two statements could be quite legitimate in the situation, but the former implies equality of status between John and the speaker and a more intimate feeling.

This concept allows us to interpret "I was dancing with her" or "She was dancing with me" differently from "We were dancing." The first statement implies that she really was not participating much, possibly because she does not like the speaker. The second statement implies that the speaker does not like her or that he does not want to let his listener know that he likes her. The last statement shows no reservation about dancing with this particular person or the act of mentioning it to someone else.

Guarded expressions of liking

So far most of our discussion has focused on how nonimmediacy reflects negative feelings. On some occasions, a more nonimmediate statement is used because the speaker feels uncomfortable about saying what he wants to say to his listener. This idea can be turned to one's advantage. In a number of social situations, it may seem too forward to make strong statements of liking or interest to a stranger or a casual acquaintance, but a more nonimmediate statement of liking would be socially acceptable.

A man sees an interesting girl in the hallway of the office building where he works and wishes to get to know her. The first chance he gets, he says, "That's a nice dress you have on." In this instance, the less immediate remark ("I like you" would be immediate) serves as an indirect way of conveying his liking. The nonimmediacy of the remark reflects his uneasiness, not because he dislikes her, but because he feels uncomfortable about this initial contact with a stranger.

Other examples: "I heard that you have a marvelous wine cellar" or "Someone told me that you grow prize-winning camellias." The speaker desires to somehow compliment his listener but feels that he cannot do so in a very direct and obvious way. So he selects something related to the listener to compliment, because the more indirect statement involving greater nonimmediacy happens to be more socially appropriate. The nonimmediacy of his statement still shows that the speaker feels uncomfortable in the situation, which is indeed why this kind of statement is more acceptable in formal relationships or contacts with a stranger.

Relations of verbal and nonverbal immediacy

Our analyses of speech here and of actions in Chapter 1 have been based on the same basic metaphor: People seek out and get involved with things they like and they try to minimize their relationship or, if possible, entirely avoid contact with things they dislike or fear. We have examined the many special devices that are available in speech to reflect a speaker's negative feelings. At this point, let us consider some analogues of these speech nonimmediacy forms in silent messages.

For example, the times at which various participants at major political negotiations arrive for a specific meeting can be important cues, provided the persons whose behaviors are under scrutiny have some prepared remarks for that session. Thus, if one of the participants comes with some prepared remarks of a hopeful quality, but makes his entrance late (relative to other sessions), this provides some grounds for questioning the sincerity of the remarks. His delay shows a reluctance to make those remarks. On the other hand, if he delivers some prepared negative remarks, his delay would constitute a positive sign and show his reluctance to seem antagonistic. In either case, the delay can also be a function of the importance of the remarks (he was busy up to the last minute preparing them) or a variety of other factors. This is of course true, but suppose we make these observations repeatedly over a large number of instances, say weekly meetings. In this case, the extraneous and unsystematic effect of some of these factors (for example, he was delayed in traffic) is washed out in the averaging process, and the underlying attitudes tend to become evident from the nonverbal or the verbal behavior of the participants. This is exactly what is done in any experiment where such ideas are tested. We do not rely on a single incident to make a judgment, so most of our experiments employ large numbers of subjects to test the immediacy ideas.

In a somewhat different context, Freud's [55] discussion of forgetting provides another point of similarity between verbal and nonverbal forms of nonimmediacy. The verbal analogues of forgetting are the speech errors and other obstructions that delay the expression of an idea [80, 90, 92]. As in the case of forgetting, such phenomena make it possible for the speaker or the actor to put off or avoid saying something that is unpleasant. Freud [55] did not interpret forgetting or slips specifically in terms of immediacy. Nevertheless, his analyses always implied that the unconscious conflicts which led to these errors or even more serious symptoms were motivated by negative feelings. In the case of forgetting, the negative feelings were toward the forgotten object. Thus, when we forget to mail a letter we have written, this helps delay contact with the intended receiver of the letter and shows reservations of the writer about the contents of his letter or toward the person who would receive it.

I have frequently and painfully been reminded of the validity of this idea when I have belatedly come across an unpleasant chore which I had forgotten to get done on time. It seems much easier to forget an unpleasant or time-consuming chore than a pleasant one.

Keep a tally of all the things you forget, listing the pleasant ones separately from the unpleasant ones. You will probably find that the unpleasant ones far outnumber the pleasant ones. Close examination of such a list can provide valuable insights into some feelings that you are not so willing to recognize in yourself.

After hearing a lecture on immediacy, a student asked if the immediacy concept could help explain why her boy friend was invariably about half an hour late for their dates. She said that this was very annoying for her but that otherwise the relationship was perfect. I suggested that this was a day for him to express some negative feelings that he was otherwise unable to convey. As we discussed her problem, it became apparent that he had a great deal of trouble refusing her requests. It also became apparent that he was especially late to their dates when these also involved her parents, so that on such occasions his tardiness was especially embarrassing to her. She concluded that most of the time she had gotten her way in the relationship. The possibility of marriage, which was also her idea initially, was highlighted by those evenings spent with her parents and accounted for his greater tardiness when the parents were involved. Considering his inability to refuse her requests, the boy was resisting in the only way that he knew how—on the most important issue that would affect the rest of his life.

Immediacy and context

More accurate estimates of the speaker's feelings can be made provided knowledge of the context in which he makes those statements is available. When a psychotherapist listens to his

Table I

Definitions of immediacy categories with examples of context and speech immediacy

Category	Immediate/ nonimmediate context	Immediate/ nonimmediate speech
Distance: spatial distance between communicator and object of communication.	A man standing on the edge of a pool comments to a friend standing beside him./A man standing on the patio some distance from a pool comments . . .	"Go ahead and jump into this pool."/"Go ahead and jump into that pool."
Time: temporal distance between communicator and object.	Question asked of communicator: "Do you think about X?"/"Have you been thinking about X?"	"I think about X."/"I used to think about X."
Order of occurrence: order of interaction with the object in an interaction sequence.	Question asked of communicator: "Did you visit X and Y?"/"Did you visit Y and X?"	"I visited X and Y."/ "I visited Y and X."

Category	Immediate/ nonimmediate context	Immediate/ nonimmediate speech
Duration: duration of interaction or duration (e.g., length) of communication about interaction.	A is asked to write a long letter about B./A is asked to write a short letter about B.	A writes a long letter about B./A writes a short letter about B.
Activity-passivity: willingness vs. an obligatory quality of communicator-object interaction.	X stopped to help someone fix a flat tire./ X had to stop to help someone fix . . .	X says, "I stopped to help someone fix a flat tire."/"I had to stop to help . . ."
Mutuality-unilaterality: degree of reciprocity of communicator-object interaction.	Question asked of communicator: "Have you and X met each other?"/ "Have you met X?"	"X and I met yesterday."/ "I met X yesterday."
Probability: degree of certainty of communicator-object interaction.	Question asked of communicator: "Are you taking physical education courses?"/"Could you take physical education courses?"	"I am taking physical education courses."/"I could take physical . . ."
Communicator participation : the totality vs. only a part, aspect or acquaintance of the communicator interacts with the object.	Question asked of communicator: "Are you going to the store?"/"Is your friend going to the store?"	"I am going to the store."/ "My friend is going to the store."
Communicator participation$_2$: the communicator interacts individually with the object vs. being part of a group of people who interact with the object.	Question asked of communicator: "Did you go to the beach last summer?"/"Did you people go to the beach last summer?"	"I went to the beach last summer."/"We went to the beach last summer."
Object participation$_1$: the totality vs. only a part, aspect or acquaintance of the object interacts with the communicator.	X is asked to write a letter and describe Y's personality./X . . . describe some of Y's habits.	In his letter, X describes Y's personality./ In his letter, X describes some of Y's habits.
Object participation$_2$: the object interacts individually with the communicator vs. being part of a group of people who interact with the communicator.	A and B are talking about C, and A asks, "Do you see C near the pool?"/ "Do you see the people near the pool?"	B says, "I see C near the pool."/"I see the people near the pool."
Communicator-object participation: the presence vs. the absence of participation of the communicator (or object) in the interaction.	Question asked of communicator: "How are you and B doing at school?"/"How are you doing at school?"	"B and I are doing well at school."/"I am doing well at school."

From A. Mehrabian. The effect of context on judgments of speaker attitude. *Journal of Personality*, 1968, *36*, 21–32. Copyright 1968 Duke University Press. Reproduced by permission.

patient list a series of problems in an initial interview, he has no knowledge of the sequence in which these problems occurred. Therefore, he can rely only on the sequence in which they are given to infer the corresponding ease with which his patient can discuss these (that is, the less negative quality of the problems mentioned earlier in the series). However, in case the therapist has an independent source of information, such as a relative of the person whom he is interviewing, then he is in an even better position to estimate the patient's feelings from the sequence in which he relates his problems. So, if the problems occurred in the sequence A, B, C and are described in the sequence C, A, B, he knows that the patient feels less negatively about C than about A.

In applying immediacy analyses, the person doing the analysis can himself create the context within which he can make a more accurate interpretation. This is done with a careful selection of the wording of the question. If I ask you, "How did you like the movie?" and you say, "I like it," there is a striking tense shift in your answer. It shows your desire to bring this experience closer to yourself than the context allows and leads me to infer that you really like the movie. On the other hand, if I ask, "How do you like my tie?" and, as you stand in front of me, you answer, "I like that one better than your other ties," then despite the immediate context, your statement implies nonimmediacy and a desire to place this object farther away. Table 1 illustrates the different categories of immediacy and provides all possible combinations of immediate or nonimmediate context with immediate and nonimmediate speech. In the first example, a man standing on the edge of a pool comments, "Go ahead and jump into this pool," which is congruent with the immediacy of the context. Or he could say, "Go ahead and jump into that pool," which would be nonimmediate and would show negative feelings. On the other hand, another man standing on the patio some distance from the pool could say, "Go ahead and jump into this pool," which shows a more positive feeling than if he were to say, "Go ahead and jump into that pool," for which statement the nonimmediacy is congruent with the context.

The finer points illustrated in Table 1 can be useful when a very cautious scrutiny of the material is required. Most everyday situations provide obvious and blatantly nonimmediate forms that can be readily interpreted. So we'll close with the following instance: "One would think that those people could do something to help themselves!" Such a statement made in reference to minority groups reveals an underlying prejudicial attitude, which may not be evident from a casual perusal of the meaning of the words but is readily detected from the excessive nonimmediacy of the style.

Applications

Jacobo Varela,* a colleague in Uruguay, has applied some of these immediacy concepts to the analysis of Shakespearean plays. According to him, Shakespeare made considerable use of nonimmediacy in the speeches of some of his characters to subtly imply their negative feelings toward persons of high status. Varela has found that Shakespeare became even more proficient in using nonimmediacy as a literary device in his later plays. Indeed, he suggests that certain aspects of nonimmediacy can be used as a test of authorship for some of the Shakespearean plays where this is uncertain. This use of nonimmediacy cues can be made also in the analysis of important speeches and documents of questionable authorship, especially in the political field.

In the context of analyzing political documents, historians and present-day political analysts can use immediacy to infer the feelings of a speaker, particularly when the speech is extemporaneous. There are very few people whose behavior and attitudes are not somehow affected by social mores and social scrutiny. This is especially the case with political leaders who may not be able to say what they feel because of various social pressures. Indeed, since the behavior of important political persons is the subject of constant scrutiny, what they say publicly is likely to be dictated by many considerations other than their private feelings.

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*Private communication.

Sometimes it is of interest to examine, in historical perspective, the feelings of a certain President or an important political figure with regard to a major social issue. When a film or videorecord is not available, it is possible to apply immediacy analysis to his extemporaneous speech. This is done most readily for answers that are given to specific questions, for instance, in a press conference. A suitable question is the open-ended one, which can permit considerable variation in the immediacy of the answer. For example, the question could be "Mr. President, what is your opinion on the economic outlook for the near future?" The answer could be any one of the following, which illustrate increasing degrees of nonimmediacy: "I think our economy is sound," "I think our economy is basically sound," "I have reason to believe that our economy is basically sound," "We have reason to believe that . . . ," "The information which is available to us at present shows that . . . ," or "Most of the major economic indicators suggest that . . ." In developing this progression of answers, we used the overinclusive "we" instead of "I"; the more tangential reference to oneself with the use of "the information shows" rather than "I conclude"; the introduction of "basically," which refers to a part or an aspect of the subject of discussion (the implication here is that superficially it may not seem so, but the economy is basically sound); and we used the word "suggest" instead of "show," which introduces uncertainty about the assertion.

The implication of increasing nonimmediacy in this series of statements is the unwillingness of the speaker to assume full responsibility for the conclusion that he draws from the economic indicators. Nonimmediacy reveals his own doubts—and possible disagreement with the opinions of his economic advisors—about this answer to the question.

Considerably more interesting analyses can be performed on the records of previous political speeches as well as current ones to arrive at some ideas about how important leaders feel about the hotly debated issues of the day.

Nonimmediacy analysis can be applied, for instance, to union contract negotiations in which participants seldom can express all that they feel or think. Those of the negotiators in such situations who are better able to understand the unverbalized attitude of the other side are in a better position to deal at the negotiation table. In a way, the process resembles a bridge or poker game, where the more knowledge the player has of his opponent's cards, the better are his chances of winning. In the negotiation situation, the astute observer should be able to infer the issues on which the other side will compromise before there is any verbal indication of willingness to yield.

In addition to scrutinizing answers to specific questions, a nonimmediacy analysis can also rely on the possible changes in the manner in which the same question is answered, over the course of negotiations. For example, it would be interesting to observe the amount of nonimmediacy associated with "hard-line" statements by representatives of one side. Over the course of negotiations, such aggressive and uncompromising statements may begin to become associated with nonimmediacy (speech errors, pauses, or some other forms of verbal nonimmediacy and nonverbal variants of nonimmediacy such as less eye contact with the person asking the question or turning to one side while answering it). This would be a hopeful sign, indicating that the representative is having trouble maintaining the hard-line approach, possibly because he knows that this is not the present "true" stand of his group, but is simply a manipulative device at the negotiation table.

Summary

We have seen how the concept of immediacy is helpful in understanding some of the seemingly arbitrary and stylistic aspects of speech, as well as the apparently inconsequential variations in nonverbal behavior. The association of immediacy with liking, preference, and generally good feelings on the one hand and the association of nonimmediacy with dislike, discomfort, and other unpleasant feelings lead to numerous applications. In addition to the commonly known interpretation of speech errors, immediacy analysis allows the interpretation of many other kinds of variations. These indicate the speaker's attempt to place something at a spatial or temporal distance or otherwise to minimize his relation to, or involvement with, the thing he describes. Variants of verbal nonimmediacy subtly minimize the speaker's responsibility for what he says by implying that the contents of his message are obvious to everyone including himself; or the contrary, that these statements are conditional and doubtful. Alternatively, responsibility is minimized by implying that the events were beyond the control of the actors, one of whom may be the speaker.

Suggested readings

A general discussion of the phenomena of speech immediacy is given in *Language within Language: Immediacy, a Channel in Verbal Communication* by Morton Wiener and myself [170]. Reports of specific work conducted in our laboratory [63, 98, 99, 101, 102, 106, 132] contain details of the results that are obtained from experiments of speech immediacy.

7

Perspective and application

From a very early age, children are taught language. Every opportunity is taken by parents, relatives, and teachers to introduce them to new concepts, to help correct errors in their speech, reading, and writing. However, this is hardly ever the case with nonverbal communication. There is no systematic effort in this culture, or in most cultures, to try to teach a child how to express his feelings nonverbally. Considering this point, it is indeed very puzzling that there is any such thing as nonverbal communication. How is it possible that, despite the absence of any explicitly accepted standards as to what certain behaviors mean, people are still able to understand each other's nonverbal communication?

To resolve this puzzle, we must remember that people rarely transmit nonverbally the kinds of complex information that they can convey with words. Nonverbal behavior primarily involves the communication of one's feelings and attitudes, and these are rather simply described. Paradoxically, the background for characterizing the nonverbal communication of feelings came from language studies [138, 158]. In an attempt to describe the most general aspects of meaning in language, Charles Osgood and his colleagues found that the bulk of the significance of any verbal concept can be adequately described using a three-dimensional scheme. These three dimensions are evaluation (good-bad, beautiful-ugly, pleasant-unpleasant), potency (large-small, strong-weak, heavy-light), and activity (active-passive, fast-slow). Various combinations of these can be used to describe any specific concept. For instance, "earthquake" is very low on evaluation, very high on potency, and moderately high on activity (that is, it is unpleasant, powerful, and moderately active). "Baldness" is very low on all three dimensions, thus explaining the extreme concerns with this situation. The feeling of "envy" is very low on evaluation but only slightly low on potency and activity. In other words, envy is judged as unpleasant but only slightly impotent and inactive. Another way to describe these results is that people can readily characterize any concept in terms of these three basic dimensions and that when they do, about 65 percent of the meaning implied by the concept is conveyed.

of subject toward experimenter

With the considerable amount of information that has become available to us from studies of nonverbal communication, it is now possible to examine these findings in retrospect and suggest why these three dimensions were so important. All three of these dimensions are the common denominators in our experience of things, events, and people; and they refer to basic feelings and attitudes. Evaluation permits us to make the crucial judgment of whether to approach or avoid someone or something. Potency informs us about the power someone or something has and can exert over us, or vice versa, thereby providing a much needed clue for intelligent dealings. For instance, something that is evaluated negatively and as powerful would be much more of a threat than one that is evaluated negatively and as weak. Finally, our judgment of someone or something as active rather than passive reflects how alive and responsive it is. Living things, especially people and animals, of course, are much more active and respond more to our different behaviors than inanimate objects. We need to be more concerned in our everyday transactions with things that are changing and somehow reacting to us than with static entities. Thus, once again, the greater activity of things, which stimulates us and arouses us to respond, is a very basic element of our reaction to the environment [14, 131].

The terminology that we use to refer to these three dimensions differs slightly from that which was introduced for the description of verbal concepts. We talk about liking or positiveness (rather than evaluation), dominance or status (in the case of potency), and responsiveness (instead of activity). Thus, the most important difference in terminology is in the case of the third dimension—responsiveness. We prefer this term since it more adequately characterizes human feelings and attitudes than the concept of activity, which is more of a physical description.

Interestingly, recent work on feelings has consistently led to the same three dimensions. Thus, facial expressions that convey feelings are adequately characterized in terms of liking, potency, and responsiveness [137, 154]. So are combinations of facial and vocal expressions [172], hand gestures [61], and postures [113]. Various combinations of these three dimensions can be used to characterize any subtle nuance of feeling. For example, a disdainful attitude includes moderate dislike, high dominance, and low responsiveness.

An important consideration is that these attitudes are part and parcel of social interactions. Thus, during any social interaction, a person can unintentionally convey in his actions an attitude or feeling that is inappropriate, excessive, misleading, or damaging to a relationship. One objective of this book was to help increase awareness of the significance of one's actions and diminish the chances of inadvertent communications that could have unfortunate consequences.

Since there are only three primary feeling dimensions that are involved in nonverbal behavior, it is conceivable that the codes that are used to translate feelings into behavior or to infer feelings from somebody else's behavior can be described in a simple and very basic way. Our thesis is that these codes are based on a few metaphors that are a very common and important part of human life.

The immediacy metaphor

like - dislike

The first of these metaphors is the immediacy or proxemic metaphor [170]. A basic and transcultural element of human life is that people approach and get more involved with things they like, things that appeal to them; and they avoid things that do not appeal to them or that induce pain and fear [85, 135]. Even an infant lying in his crib, incapable of locomotion, makes grasping movements and bodily reaches for certain things that interest him. These grasping movements subsequently develop into reaching to touch in the presence of another, which is one of the most elementary forms of denoting interest in something or someone else. Later this is freed from emotional connotations and evolves to pointing to underlie the demonstrative adjectives "this," "that," or "those" [169].

Due to its universal quality, the immediacy metaphor (that is, people approach liked and avoid disliked things) provides one important framework within which people can translate their actions and expressions into like-dislike or vice versa. The metaphor is such a pervasive one that it takes very little explicit instruction for even children to understand what is meant by certain behaviors or to communicate their own feelings using nonverbal cues.

There are also many subtle variations of immediacy in speech [99, 101, 102]. For instance, I could say to a visitor, "I have been writing a paper" or "I am writing a paper." The second statement is temporally more immediate and implies greater liking of my activity. Or I could say, "I'm writing this paper for those people . . . ," versus, "I'm writing this paper for these people . . ."Again, the closeness implied by "these" instead of "those" reflects a more positive feeling.

To summarize then, for the first of the three metaphors, behaviors relating to like-dislike are expressed and understood in terms of the immediacy metaphor. Immediacy or closeness in the interaction between two persons includes greater physical proximity and/or more perceptual stimulation of the two by one another. Immediacy between a person and an object involves greater perceptual availability of that object to the person. Approach and immediacy indicate preference, positive evaluation, and liking, whereas avoidance and nonimmediacy indicate lack of preference, dislike, and, in extreme cases, fear. The immediacy metaphor helps to identify behaviors that are communicative and that relate to expressions of like-dislike. These include a closer position to another, touching, turning of the head so that it is in a face-to-face position with the other person and allows mutual observation, and leaning forward toward another while seated.

The power metaphor

dominance or status

For the second dimension, dominance or status, the communication codes seem to be based on a power or fearlessness metaphor. Power coexists with large size (for example, strutting versus shuffling, expansive versus small and controlled postures and movements), height (for example, standing upright versus bowing). Absence of fear (the opposite of vigilance) is implied by relaxation versus tension and by the ability to turn one's back to another [111]. A tradition in historic Middle Eastern and Oriental cultures was for a person of low standing to back out of a room rather than to turn around and walk out. Abbreviated versions of such backing out are observed even today. This is frequently combined with bowing and a low volume of speech—the latter being consistent with the metaphorical expression of weakness and smallness. Also, persons of high status assume a comfortable and relaxed sitting positon, whereas low-status persons remain standing.

As already mentioned, fearlessness is also part of the power metaphor and is used in various cultures to convey a higher status. A person who is not afraid is more likely to turn his back on others. That is, he tends to be more relaxed and less vigilant in the presence of others who are weaker and have reason to fear him. The latter are more watchful, observant, and alert; they are less relaxed or more tense (for example, standing rather than seated; erect rather than leaning or reclining).

More generally, any combination of postures and movements that implies power and strength can become part of some culture's accepted mode of the show of status. However, strength need be shown only occasionally to maintain status; so, persons of high status are simply more relaxed and less fearful most of the time. Even though the specific behaviors involved are different in different cultures, the underlying metaphor is the same—power.

In our culture, besides obvious signs such as cars, furniture arrangements, or titles, relaxation-tension is a very important way in which status differences are subtly conveyed [62, 111]. In each other's presence, persons of higher status are more relaxed than those of lower status. Greater relaxation is evident in the asymmetric position of the trunk and limbs (for example, legs crossed, arms asymmetrically placed, body leaning sideways, and reclining if seated). For example, if you lean forward in your chair, you will be more tense than if you were to lean back and cross your legs. This would seem even less relaxed than if you were to recline considerably and place your legs on another chair or on top of your desk. Picture a "well-bred" schoolgirl in an English boarding school—she sits in an erect posture with her hands clasped in her lap and legs hanging so that her feet are placed flat on the floor. This is in sharp contrast to a teen-age tough's posture as he sits slouched in a classroom. The former embodies the respectful attitude toward authority and established tradition, whereas the latter exudes disrespect and defiance.

A striking and consistent finding from our studies is that males in this culture assume more relaxed postures than do females [111]. This is the case whether the other people present are male or female and in a variety of circumstances. Women's Liberationists, take heed! Relax!

The extreme rigidity of a soldier at attention while being inspected by a high-ranking officer is an unparalleled example of the principle that relates tension to low status. In this case, a casual and relaxed military officer walks past a straight line of soldiers all standing in a rigid symmetrical stance.

* The responsiveness metaphor

Life, and the vitality associated with it, provide the metaphor for the communication of the third primary feeling dimension, responsiveness. Living things, in contrast to inanimate objects, react and change in response to their environments. The reactive and changeable quality of living things is especially highlighted by the rapid changes in animals, as distinguished from slow growth changes shared with plants. These changeable qualities result from the awareness of the surroundings. This particular combination of greater awareness of the environment and the adaptive change associated with it is encompassed in the concept of responsiveness.

Responsiveness is probably the most basic way in which humans convey their feelings. It covers the gamut of behavior from sleeping to a manic state. In sleep we are hardly capable of showing any kind of feeling; in an excited or hyperactive state, we respond emotionally to most of the happenings around us. Thus, responsiveness is the very basic act of emotional reaction to one's environment and can be either positive or negative in quality.

In discussing Mythical thought, Ernst Cassirer [27] described the concept of *Mana,* which in many cultures distinguished unusual things and happenings involving strong emotional reactions of fear, surprise, or joy, from everyday and common entities and events. This dichotomy, which is almost universal in Mythical thought, supports our idea that responsiveness is indeed a basic aspect of human reaction to the world.

Even in present-day cultures, we frequently come across words that designate events or people of an unusually good or bad quality and distinguish them as a group from others that are common and uninteresting. The word "uptight," so popular nowadays, has been used to refer to something that is extremely pleasant and special (*note:* "Uptight, out of sight"). Now it is more commonly used to refer to people and situations that are unpleasant and uncomfortable.

From the standpoint of description and measurement, responsiveness is indexed by changes in activity [112,113]. You are walking down a hallway and notice a friend. You stop and say "hello"—this involves a temporary change in your walking rhythm and you talk instead of being silent. As you walk outdoors, your head turns to allow your eyes to scan the surroundings. Curiosity aroused by an unusual accident or gathering disrupts the usual flow of action and introduces new patterns of movement.

The counterpart of such changes in behavior is the interesting, changeable, unusual, and foreground rather than common and background quality of people or events in the environment. We are aroused and change our activity patterns in reaction to unusual things of a pleasant nature or those of an unpleasant, repulsive, or threatening quality [14]. According to Jean Piaget [142], it is this changing and reactive quality of animal life that defines intelligent and adaptive functioning.

In reacting to another person, we shift the direction of our look, our facial expression changes, and we converse, which in turn involves how fast we speak, our vocal expressiveness (fluctuations in the tone of voice), and our speech volume. So, responsiveness to another is simply indexed by amount of change in facial and vocal expressions, the rate at which one speaks (number of words per minute), and the volume of speech [112]. The combination of an expressive voice and face and rapid high-volume speech can be associated with feelings as diverse as anger and those involved when one attempts to be persuasive. In contrast, a person who is physically exhausted and who is incapable of any of these behaviors, totally lacks responsiveness.

People are more aroused by and are more responsive to strange, novel, and changing things than they are to familiar and static entities [14]. Since other people are far more changeable than the inanimate objects in our environment, we tend to be more responsive to people. And of course, from among the different people we meet, we are more responsive to those who arouse strong emotions in us than those who blend with the background [131].

Our presentation included separate chapters for the immediacy and power metaphors but not for the responsiveness metaphor. This is not because the latter is unimportant, but simply because very little experimental work with this third aspect of silent messages is presently available.

Metaphors—shared but implicit

Metaphorical expressions of liking, dominance, and responsiveness are only sometimes formalized and explicitly taught in a culture. For example, in the Middle East, students are taught to stand up as a teacher enters a classroom or when addressing him. In the Orient, one would have no trouble getting an explanation of the significance of bowing and its relation to status. In this culture, most people would agree that it is impolite to put one's feet on somebody else's office desk, particularly when that person is in a prestigious social position. Nevertheless, the coding rules for nonverbal behavior and the metaphors that underlie them remain mostly implicit, and they are not the subject of discussion or teaching. We do not have a dictionary that defines our nonverbal behavior, and we certainly do not have a corresponding grammar. The metaphors that have been described can be viewed as a set of guidelines for discussing nonverbal behavior.

The important function of these metaphors is appreciated when we consider that any behavior that is observable can serve as an outlet for feelings and is thus, in principle, communicative. Behaviors as diverse as the eye blink, crossing of legs while seated, postures, gestures, head nods, facial and vocal expressions, tension in the muscles, and twitches are all potentially significant in communication, although of course some are more communicative than others (for example, facial expressions compared to foot movements). One of the biggest stumbling blocks in the study of communication is precisely this fact; there are so many behaviors one can observe and study [32, 37, 40, 82, 95, 151, 153] that it becomes difficult to know where to start, what to exclude, or how to order the priorities. In desperation, some investigators turned to a physical characterization of movements. Ray Birdwhistell [16, 17, 18] described movements of each body part in terms of their width and extent or velocity. Again, in dance, where one would expect at least some reliance on feeling and intuition for describing movements, it is discouraging to find that the only comprehensive system of notation describes movements merely as motion, with no reference to what they signify [72]. Such reliance on physical description alone for nonverbal behavior is inadequate. It fails to take into account the similar significance of unlike movements that emanate from different body parts (for example, approval given with a head nod or a pat on the back). Even more importantly, it fails to provide a direction for identifying significant nonverbal behaviors.

Our consideration of the underlying metaphors shows that descriptions of nonverbal behavior need not be physicalistic and arbitrary. Despite the absence of dictionaries and grammar for nonverbal behavior, there is a consensus among the people of one culture and even people of different cultures [43] as to how they translate their feelings into behaviors or infer other people's feelings from others' behaviors. This consensus supports our thesis that the codes are based on implicit and universal metaphors that are basic parts of human experience.

General applications

With the perspective of our approach in mind, it is now easier to proceed to some general applications of this approach in frequently encountered facets of social life.

Selling

Many subtleties in the use of actions rather than words become evident in the face-to-face promotion of a product. A salesman would certainly appear strange if he were to knock on a door and say, "I like you and therefore want to tell you something about our new product." It would seem inappropriate and insincere; and he might get the door slammed in his face. How can you meet someone and in the first moment, even before you get a good look at him, say that you like him? No one would believe it. Yet a good salesman does just this and gets away with it. He uses nonverbal behavior so cleverly that he does not need words to get this message across.

Why does a door-to-door salesman go to all this bother? He knows that to make a sale, he must not only show enthusiasm about his product but also somehow get the potential buyer to feel the same. This means getting someone to think differently about his product—acquire a new attitude toward it or change an existing one. Most salesmen intuitively, and quite correctly [114, 127], know that if you wish to influence someone, then it helps to have him get to like you. This is because people who like each other have a greater tendency to meet each others' demands. In the case of the salesman and his customer, the salesman must somehow elicit liking from the total stranger in a very short time. He does so by nonverbally showing positive feelings [134]. You have heard the expression "The customer is always right." He may assume a very respectful attitude and smile or be extra attentive when the customer talks. He hopes that this will pay off through reciprocation and compliance from a customer who will buy the product.

This method of showing positive feelings toward the customer is necessary when the product will not sell itself, that is, when it is indeed necessary to bring about a change in the attitudes and behavior of a customer. On the other hand, a different method can be effective if the products are of high quality.

In sales rooms of prestigious stores in more affluent districts, usually nobody even approaches the shopper, who may feel lost to some degree because it is not clear where things are situated or whom to ask about prices and terms. There frequently are salespeople around who are casually talking to one another or to some other customer and seem to be ignoring the newcomer. Their aloofness implies "This furniture is good enough to sell itself; I don't have to sell it to you." In this situation when one asks for help, the salesman behaves in a very businesslike and matter-of-fact manner, with a good chance of making his sale.

Indeed, a shopper in one of these more expensive stores who is not well dressed may sometimes find the salesmen slightly disrespectful, with the implication that their products are not within the shopper's budget. Some such customers may be tempted to prove them wrong, even though they do not particularly like anything on display.

The same kind of situation can occur in an expensive restaurant if the diners are not "properly" dressed. The maître d' will seat them in "Siberia," where the waiter will take little care in serving them. Again the implicit communication is "You obviously do not belong here." The diner is thus challenged to prove that he does belong by buying an expensive meal he may not actually prefer.

Whether any of these sales methods succeeds depends on the quality of the product and the sophistication of the customer. When there is no obvious need for the product or when the product is of poor quality, the traditional selling approach is more effective: the salesman conveys liking and thereby elicits cooperation and buying behavior. When the product is of high quality, communication of positiveness is unnecessary and may even have an adverse effect. For instance, a well-known gourmet who made it a habit to remain anonymous once accidentally revealed his identity while in his favorite Chinese restaurant. The maître d' then tried excessively hard to please the man. He virtually ignored what was ordered and served special dishes he thought would be sure to please. He even went so far as to serve one of the most expensive champagnes available. The gourmet felt this was the worst meal he'd ever had at that restaurant. As far as the champagne was concerned, he just happened to prefer beer with Chinese food.

These examples of salesmanship have their analogues in the behavior of women who wish to attract the attention and interest of selected men. Feminine tactics also can be categorized into two classes: the straightforward positive approach that is based on actions (smiles, proximity) as distinct from the aloof and unconcerned approach. Just as in the selling situation, the latter is more likely to imply, "You need me more than I need you," whereas the former says, "I like you, don't you want to be nice to me?" Indiscriminate reliance on either one of these two tactics, to the total exclusion of the other, is less effective than the ability to gauge and determine their usefulness according to the interest and level of sophistication of the other person in the situation.

Advertising and political campaigns

The superb effectiveness or blatant failure of an advertisement can often be understood in terms of the subservient role of words to actions. In any of a number of television commercials, a gas station attendant explains the advantages of a new gasoline product to a customer. In one such commercial, they face each other at a distance of only 6 inches to discuss the merits of the product. This is excessively close and is an extraordinary position for two strangers to be in [50, 68]. It leads one to wonder why it was used at all. It may be that such a position, because of its unexpected and unusual quality, was used deliberately by the advertiser to arouse strong feelings in the viewer. It was probably hoped that the added attention which the advertisement would attract would increase its effectiveness.

Unfortunately, however, the advertiser paid a price in using this device. The 6-inch distance between two strangers is uncomfortable and arouses some anxiety. Psychologists have shown that when a neutral event is repeatedly followed by a negative emotional response, a negative feeling becomes associated with parts of the event [83, 165]. The strong feelings aroused by the advertisement in this case are somewhat negative, so we expect some generalization of this negative affect to the product being advertised. To justify this advertisement, one would have to show that the positive contribution of increased attention far outweighs these negative effects. The same consideration applies to any other advertising that generates negative affect in the viewer during the course of the advertisement.

Television advertising is increasingly becoming a high-level art in which subtle nonverbal behaviors within brief episodes can have a considerable impact on how pleasant and funny, or how unpleasant and ineffective the advertisement is. Sometimes a business manager may decide to deliver a short message himself, in an attempt to establish a more intimate relationship with the prospective customers. In this type of advertisement the facial expressions and the changes in tone of voice, postures, and gestures of the person delivering the message can be even more important than what he says [134]. Unfortunately, most advertising of this sort featuring the business manager himself is poor and ineffective. One familiar example is a late-night advertisement by a man who owns the business being advertised. His speech is hesitant and halting, and his voice is flat. His face does show some expressiveness, but his posture is stationary and he uses no gestures. This kind of communication is particularly lacking in what we term "responsiveness" to the viewer [113], and one can hardly expect such an impartial and bland message to be persuasive [134].

Incidentally, for reference, Zero Mostel's acting provides a fine example of the exact opposite—a constantly mobile face, tremendously subtle and expressive postures, together with a richly expressive voice.

The reason why such blatant oversights occur in advertising is that most people are at best only vaguely aware of their own nonverbal style and responsiveness over different communication media [117].

Notice how certain acquaintances or friends sound very different or even strange on the phone? Sometimes you can't even picture how a particular voice could possibly fit the person you know.

This happens because the characteristic level of responsiveness, positiveness, or domineering quality in a person's facial expressions, gestures, and postures can differ considerably from that conveyed by his manner of speech. It is possible, then, that a "different-sounding" friend has a very responsive and active face but his voice lacks expressiveness, thus giving a much less lively and more withdrawn impression of him on the phone. Chances are he is not even aware of this discrepancy. On the other hand, a person who has an inexpressive face and stiff postures may sound lively and vibrant on the phone if his voice effectively conveys different feelings.

Although it is easy to measure how responsive each individual is in terms of his facial, vocal, and gestural expressiveness [112], most people are unaware of these qualities in themselves. They may be unaware that they are adept at using only certain channels and thus may be unable to select the most appropriate channel to convey a specific message.

Consider the characteristic positiveness, dominant-submissiveness quality, and responsiveness in your manner of speech, your facial expressions, your postures, and gestures. Rate each quality and each message source (for example, face) on a scale ranging from −3 to +3. Rate a close friend and ask him to rate you; then compare notes. You may find the exercise very revealing.

Romance

Silent messages are also very important in strategy and tactics used by women in the "battle between the sexes." In some of the predominantly orthodox Moslem areas of the Middle East, women are not permitted to be seen by men. But there is nothing to stop a veil from "accidentally" dropping, revealing a woman's face (and her interest). Similar "accidents" were used by women in the Victorian era. A girl could sneak a look from behind her fan and imply "I know I'm not supposed to look at strange men, but I can't help wanting to look at you." The convenience of being "clumsy" with handkerchiefs has long been universally recognized. In fact, ancient Chinese girls found handkerchiefs so convenient that their costumes included "built-in" handkerchiefs in the form of elaborate and long sleeves which reached to the floor. As it was considered ill manners to look at men, they were taught to look down throughout an encounter. At a certain point during the conversation, a girl could raise her elaborate "sleeves" to cover her face in sham modesty. With this raising of her hand, it was convenient to steal an upward glance at the man. Blushing and covering her face, the girl appeared enticingly "modest," and with this charming gesture she also saw enough to be able to elaborate about the man during subsequent conversations with her confidantes.

Even today, people are discouraged from expressing personal feelings to strangers and so it becomes necessary to rely on nonverbal behavior to infer how another person feels and how to pursue a relationship further [146, 170]. A girl who has been on a first date can invite a second encounter by "accidentally" forgetting something in his car. Again, consider a boy who has met an attractive girl at a party and is wondering if he should ask her to "cut out." Having such a request turned down, just because it comes too soon or possibly because the girl simply is not interested, can be embarrassing and uncomfortable for both. In the case where the timing is wrong, the refusal of the request may have an abortive effect on the conversation. So, then, it becomes necessary to somehow find out just how much the girl is interested and when she will be willing to show it.

Social dancing affords one such opportunity. In the older dance forms, interest and liking could have been conveyed in terms of closeness and touching. With the newer dances, one needs to rely on other cues. If a person stays several feet from his partner, never smiles, and is constantly scanning the field, the disinterest is obvious. On the other hand, one who comes close to the partner, smiles, and welcomes eye contact is expressing positive interest and liking.

Such encounters can be understood in terms of the more positive connotations of looking at another, standing closer, touching, and just being more attentive. These represent the broad class of immediacy behaviors that involve approach instead of avoidance and that are subtly indicative of liking [112, 113, 170].

Social alienation

The fact that we have changed from dancing as partners to dancing more as individuals reflects the large-scale social alienation to which humans have had to adapt in moving from small rural communities to impersonal cities. Comedian Flip Wilson once said that people go to sensitivity groups to learn to touch each other. The increasing numbers of sensitivity groups, T-groups, and group marathons testify to the longing in this culture for immediate interpersonal contacts and for settings in which intimacy can be readily attained. The right to such an intimacy is bought through special agents (group leaders, psychotherapists) who define a space and spell out new rules that differ from those of the everyday world [10, 94]. The hope of such therapies is that the greater intimacy that people learn to attain and to tolerate with strangers over a short time will somehow equip them to express their feelings more openly in their everyday life.

With the increasing social alienation, people seem to be relying more and more on nonverbal behavior to convey their own feelings and to understand the feelings of others [177]. Until it becomes permissible to openly verbalize all feelings—an ideal that seems inherently impossible in social groups—it is possible to improve the communication process by taking note of the many feelings that actions can convey. Silent messages are present all the time, whether we speak or not. They augment or contradict what we say and say what we are unable to put into words [91]. Therefore, actions can often have dramatic, though unintended, effects on others.

Clues to another's discomfort

Some of the examples we have considered illustrated how nonverbal cues are used to eliminate slight embarrassments and ease awkward moments in social situations. At other times, nonverbal cues may inadvertently lead to, or signal, discomfort and anxiety [36, 90, 92]. I remember watching a televised interview of a young man whose father was being held hostage by a revolutionary group in Uruguay. At the time of the interview, the chances of saving the father's life were very slim, and indeed he was killed on the following day. During the interview, his son did not reveal any obvious discomfort as he talked; and, considering the tremendous pressure of the situation, this was very puzzling. Then the astute cameraman who had been focusing on the boy's head and shoulders suddenly shifted the camera to focus on his hands. They were very tense and tightly clasped, revealing the strain under which he labored. This example shows how a person's verbal behavior, his facial expressions, or his tone of voice may reveal hardly any distress, while a great deal of discomfort and anxiety is conveyed in a less obvious way—extreme tension in the hands, blushing, or a throbbing jugular vein.

Other more subtle signs of discomfort and negative feelings are betrayed by our postures and eye movements. A familiar example is the way we behave in an elevator [156, p. 25]. This situation usually forces us to stand very close to strangers, a position that would not be assumed spontaneously in a larger space. Closeness implies intimacy and liking, which is socially unacceptable to a stranger [7, 50]. Thus, people in an elevator compensate for this uncomfortable and excessive closeness by turning away to avoid meeting each other's eyes and staring at the floor indicator signal. If in this situation we were to actually face the other person directly and look into his eyes, we not only would make him very uncomfortable but probably would also give the impression of being strange or possibly even maladjusted.

The actions that are part of obvious discomfort, as in an elevator, show up in more abbreviated forms in less strained situations. They can serve as important clues for understanding how another person feels, even when he says nothing about it. A young man who is out with a girl for the first time may exhibit the same uncomfortable motions when he stands close and faces her, contemplating a more intimate gesture. He may appear tense and avoid her eyes, without being able to reach for her hand. He would have less difficulty if he were to first take her hand in his and then move closer and to a face-to-face position. This remedy is based on the rule that large and discontinuous changes are more difficult to make than graduated ones [115]. Taking the girl's hand while she walks alongside is less obviously a sexual advance than if he does so while facing her in close proximity.

The nonverbally handicapped

The preceding rule can also be applied to understand why meeting strangers is such an ordeal for some people—there is suddenly a host of new things to cope with and these people are overwhelmed. One important element in this situation is not knowing how others feel toward them; this is much less the case with the people they already know [114, 127]. Sometimes, then, the increased discomfort of someone you meet is not so much because he dislikes you but rather because of his concern about how you feel. The uneasiness at such times can be a considerable handicap.

We have all on occasion dealt with persons who would not look us in the eye while talking or listening to us. I remember hiring a girl who throughout her first interview hardly even looked in my direction. Since it is a well-established fact that the amount of mutual gaze with another person can be a measure of like or dislike [48, 104, 105], her avoidance of eye contact meant that she had some quite negative feelings and expectations about me, possibly as an authority figure. Despite this, I hired her because of her qualifications. Indeed, she turned out to be an extremely good worker. I was also happy to observe that with time and increased familiarity, her predisposition to dislike and be afraid was affected by her actual experiences and she began to have a normal degree of eye contact with me. However, in other work or social situations, her behavior could have had undesirable consequences. Another interviewer might have disqualified her simply because her behavior seemed odd. Socially, she was probably considered detached and uninterested.

This example is an extreme one; nevertheless, it shows how some people behave automatically and characteristically in ways which are considerably different from those of others. In fact, there are striking differences in the general positiveness or negativeness of different people's behavior. Dale Carnegie [26] noted these differences and recognized that the inadvertent tendency to be less positive is the underlying reason why some people have great difficulty in making friends or in simply having pleasant relationships. He suggested, for instance, that people should smile more if they want more friends. We now have evidence that he was right [120]. Positiveness is conveyed nonverbally through facial and vocal expressions, postures, gestures, eye contact, or head nodding. In addition, the amount someone talks in a conversation can also show positiveness [97, 129]. People differ in their use of these behaviors and thus in their positiveness to others. Those who are popular tend to have a more positive manner, even when they meet a perfect stranger. Although these findings may seem obvious to some, they are clearly not evident to all. Lonely people may abhor the fact that they do not have many friends or are unable to meet and make new ones. Yet, they are unaware that their neutral or even negative silent messages discourage others from getting close to them and liking them [129].

✓ The effects of some of these positive-negative actions are especially pronounced among strangers. Even though verbal expressions of feelings toward a stranger are strongly discouraged in this culture, subtle communication of feelings is all-important in determining whether an encounter will develop into a fruitful relationship or pass on as another insignificant event. A chance meeting is more likely to develop into a friendship when positive feelings are exchanged. Such feelings cannot be conveyed with words to a stranger because one would be judged too forward and presumptuous. It is thus necessary to use the more subtle nonverbal acts for this purpose. It is seen, then, that those who project neutral or negative feelings as part of their social style would be handicapped here, even though they may be very interested in the person they have just met [127, 129].

Other difficulties arise when we cannot accurately interpret the positive quality of another's nonverbal behavior toward us or when we cannot convey disinterest to another or "read" it coming from another. Some of these problems arise when we must rely on our actions because it is impolite to be more explicit. We have all had the irritating experience of being with someone who did not understand the subtle cues of our desire to terminate the conversation or to be left alone. One can try to indicate that he is tired or has something else to do by talking and smiling less, turning slightly away, or even busying himself with other things [115, p. 75] and still fail to get the message across.

People who cannot "read" the nonverbal messages of disinterest from another often desperately need a relationship and find even slight rejection extremely threatening. Unfortunately, their inability to recognize someone's temporary disinterest due to circumstances can cause frustration and resentment and can ruin any chances of furthering a much needed relationship. This kind of unhappy experience increases such people's doubts about their self-worth. In despair, they cling even more in other encounters, only to experience more alienation and disappointment.

Some new psychotherapeutic approaches have been developed in line with the idea that a person's nonverbal behavior is an important part of his effect on others and can strongly influence the reactions he receives. If a person walks around with a posture which silently cries out, "Please don't hit me!" "You are beneath me," or "I don't need people," then he may be constantly confronted with unsatisfying situations or may find that people avoid him without any obvious reason. The problem here is the lack of awareness of one's own style and the emotional effect the style has on others. Some therapists start at this point in trying to produce change [20, 145]. The following approaches also employ a similar scheme.

In sensitivity groups, people are encouraged to tell each other the feelings they get from one another [94]—this is more in line with the methods of verbal and insight-oriented therapies. The hope is that once a person recognizes the kind of effect he has, he will change his behavior for the better.

Other methods are even more direct in their approach to change. Wilhelm Reich [145] used relaxation exercises with his "stiff-charactered" obsessive-compulsive patients. He sought to loosen their unchanging ways and feelings by first modifying their characteristic postures and movements. According to him, this was the most effective means of dealing with these otherwise stubbornly incurable patients. The implicit premise in his approach was that actions and feelings go hand in hand; and if feelings cannot be changed through discussion and insight, perhaps they can be modified by simply changing a person's actions.

This premise has been elaborated extensively in the more recent action-oriented therapies, of which dance or body-awareness therapy is a good example. Here, instead of talking, the primary therapeutic activity is movement and the effort to express different kinds of emotions through movement. These in turn provide the background for a greater awareness of feelings and sensation (such as relaxation-tension or a desire for more activity) emanating from the body. With increased understanding of these muscular states, it becomes easier for patients to exercise control over them—to intensify a given sensation, decrease it, or replace it with another. For example, a person who is nervous and tense in others' presence is taught to concentrate on his movements and try to relax. Once he has achieved this, he proceeds to master this state of physical relaxation while moving around with a partner who does the same thing. Further exercises carry him to a level where he can remain physically relaxed while also attending to others in a movement group. This provides the background for more comfortable interactions with members of the group outside the dance situation and for similar interactions with others who are not even in the group. The general theoretical basis for such an approach has been provided in discussions of systematic desensitization [165, 175].

In a different approach to dance therapy, the therapist begins by asking the patient to move about on his own initiative; these movements can be particularly informative about the characteristic feelings that the patient conveys in his movements. Analogous inferences were made from the stationary postures of schizophrenic patients [58]. Alternatively, the patient may be specifically asked to express different emotions through movement. By observing these movements, the therapist, from his experience, is able to find out which emotions the patient typically and easily conveys and which he has difficulty expressing. The latter are symptomatic of a more general difficulty and the patient is encouraged to express these particular feelings in movements. The improved ability to express such feelings in actions can then directly gain expression in social situations or can provide the stimulus for a more explicit discussion of feelings. For instance, a patient who learns to show a hurt feeling with postures and actions on the dance floor is better able to at least show this feeling in another person's presence, who might then ask, "What's the matter, did I hurt your feelings?"

Psychotherapy

Some of the most interesting uses of silent messages occur in situations where the kind of impression one makes nonverbally is different from that made with words.

Psychoanalytically oriented therapists usually refuse to give direct answers or advice to patients. Questions like "What should I do, doctor?" do not receive specific answers. When a patient repeatedly encounters this kind of reaction from his doctor, he begins to realize that his therapist is not going to tell him what to do. In fact, some therapists emphatically deny any attempt to influence what the patient does. They contend that their primary aim is to provide an environment in which the patient can explore and resolve his own thoughts and feelings about different matters that trouble him.

Despite such therapists' firm intention not to maneuver their patients, researchers who have viewed therapy sessions through one-way mirrors have found that these therapists do influence patients, albeit in subtle ways. Such a therapist can readily convey interest or disinterest, pleasure, encouragement, or disappointment nonverbally. He may lean back or turn away slightly instead of saying "I don't like what you just said" or "I don't like the kinds of things that you've been doing." Alternatively, if he likes what his patient reports, he may convey more positiveness in his voice while speaking, address his patient by first name, lean forward as he listens, have more eye contact, or ask for more elaboration [115, pp. 77–81].

As already mentioned, even the most adamant "nondirective" therapists do indeed influence their patients nonverbally. Further, there is evidence that the changes that occur in the patients follow from these silent messages of the therapists [164]. Some sophisticated therapists recognize the effectiveness of this method and act accordingly. However, many traditional psychotherapists still refuse to admit this inconsistency in their behavior. In view of such denials, it is puzzling why this two-sided approach to therapy ever developed. Why did Freud [56] find it undesirable to tell his patients what to do?

The answer is quite evident in our experiences with our friends and relatives. Someone might mention a problem which apparently is beyond his capacity to cope with and ask for advice. We give him the advice, and he ignores it without even giving it a try. Someone else may make a half-hearted attempt to apply the advice, only to come back and say, "See, it didn't work. Nothing works!"

This is the kind of situation that the therapist must avoid. He can't afford to tell his patient what to do, have him try it in a half-hearted way, and then return to prove his therapist's incompetence. Also, he can't allow his authority to be questioned by having his patient tell him, "No, that's no good. I can't do this. It won't work." Therapists have therefore learned to behave differently from their patients' friends and relatives. They firmly refuse to give any verbal and concrete advice, but they encourage their patients to talk about their problems and experiences. Such constant probing reveals the many examples of a problem area, and the therapist can nonverbally show approval of or encouragement for even small changes that are in the right direction. Alternatively, he can assume a neutral or possibly negative attitude when a socially maladaptive way of coping with a problem is mentioned.

Similar interchanges occur between parents and their children and between married couples [115]. A parent may find that a rebellious child systematically refuses to listen to his suggestions or demands. He therefore accidentally or deliberately resorts to using the same technique that therapists employ with their patients. He stops making any obvious suggestions to the child; but, when the child behaves in the way he wants, he gives him more attention or does small favors for him. Similarly, when a husband does something that upsets his wife and asks, "Are you upset?" the wife may respond with "No, I'm not upset," while nonverbally communicating distress and aloofness. A sensitive husband understands and responds to some of these unverbalized feelings of his wife.

Summary

In reading this book, the reader may have wondered, "Clearly, it is not always possible to substitute actions for words; if so, what exactly are the limitations of our actions as instruments of communication?" Anyone who has played charades knows that language is by far the most effective medium for expressing complex and abstract ideas. The ideas contained in this or any other book cannot be communicated with actions. This would be possible only if we were to develop a special code such as that used by deaf persons, and this would amount to learning a new language with all the accompanying arbitrary conventions.

One important difference between actions and speech, then, is that actions only permit the expression of a limited set of things, primary feelings and attitudes. This is in part an explanation for the second important difference: The conventions that underlie nonverbal communication are fewer in number and are more intuitively obvious than those of a language. We referred to these conventions as the metaphors that allow one to convey varying degrees of like-dislike, dominance or status, and responsiveness. The latter ranges from a total lack of any kind of reaction to another person to a very strong reaction, which may be of a negative quality (such as anger) or a positive quality (such as praise). Even though this seems extremely limited, it is not. If we use all possible combinations of different values of liking, dominance, and responsiveness, we can express numerous subtle shades of feeling.

Since the codes for understanding and using nonverbal behaviors are much simpler than those for verbal ones, it is not surprising to find that silent messages are of paramount importance in the communications of children up to the age of about four [118, 121, 169].

Our analysis of communication in terms of metaphors illustrates their more general function in human thought. Metaphors draw upon the elementary and familiar aspects of sensory-perceptual experience, whose rich connotations provide the basis for understanding the novel (as in science) and the unfamiliar (as in learning). Philosophers Ernst Cassirer [27] and Stephen Pepper [141] discussed the function of metaphors in human culture; I have illustrated the specific application of metaphors in social science [108]. Their frequent use is also evident in art (for example, when the poet likens a human being to a tree) and in the altogether familiar realm of advertising (for example, naming a car "Jaguar" to capitalize on shared impressions of that animal's qualities or associating strength and wild qualities with a beer by giving it the logo of a bull).

Suggested readings

For a more detailed presentation of the work with language which led to the identification of evaluation, potency and activity as basic aspects of human reactions to people and things, see Chapter 2 of *The Measurement of Meaning* by Charles Osgood, George Suci, and Percy Tannenbaum [138]. This same approach was used by Charles Osgood [137] to describe reactions to facial expressions. My report "A Semantic Space for Nonverbal Behavior" [113] outlines a more general application to nonverbal behaviors. For a discussion of the transcultural quality of nonverbal communications, see Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen's report "Constants across Cultures in the Face and Emotion" [43]. The basic philosophy of metaphors and their role in science is discussed in *World Hypotheses* by Stephen Pepper [141], and these ideas were more specifically applied in the case of personality theories in Chapter 1 of my book *An Analysis of Personality Theories* [108]. Other approaches to the study of nonverbal communication are characterized by the very readable accounts of Edward T. Hall [68, 70] and Robert Sommer [160], and by the extensive work of a number of researchers for which some representative references are given [18, 30, 37, 42, 54, 57, 152, 163].

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chapter 3

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